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editorial

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welcome

Welcome to the first issue of Digital Arts - your source of creative innovation and the new name for Digit magazine. The name and design of the magazine has changed, and we hope that you find it a change for the good. It follows months of listening to what you wanted from a creative magazine - and our redesign is more than a new masthead.

Digital Arts aims to give you more creative content and inspiration than ever before... from topical features, behind-the-scenes projects, and in-depth creative tutorials, to hardware and software buying advice that you can trust.

To celebrate our new look, we've a packed issue full of hot creative content. Things to look out for in your new-look issue include:

Discover how to boost your profile and get your work noticed - we reveal the tips and techniques used by successful designers in our in-depth feature *Promote Yourself* (page 24). Then check out our ten ways to be more creative with scientific advice that may surprise you.

In our exciting tutorials you can learn to recreate the look of the movie *A Scanner Darkly* (page 50), follow illustrator Neil Duerden's guidance for creating fantastic Photoshop artwork (page 46), build a Flash platform game (page 56) and animate titles in After Effects (page 60).

In our revamped project sections, we've looked at the astounding visual effects of the movie *300*, and explored the redesign of famed magazine *TIME* (page 42).

Enjoy your first issue of Digital Arts and please let us know what you think. We welcome all feedback, and I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Lynn Wright
editor

recycle

DigitalArts

Digital Arts delivers authoritative creative advice that directly impacts on you as a designer. Digital Arts covers design, visual effects, video, interactive, 3D, and animation, and our tutorials are sourced from leading creative practitioners. Digital Arts is the leading reviews magazine, and reviews more creative products than any other UK monthly magazine.

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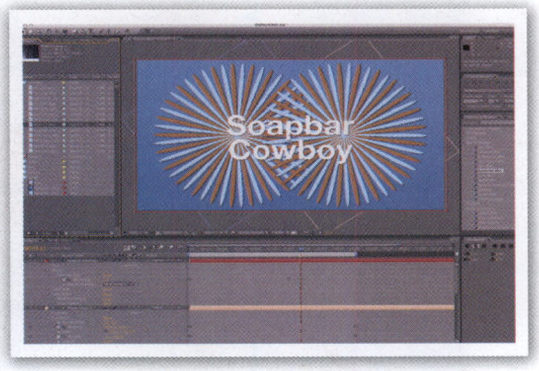

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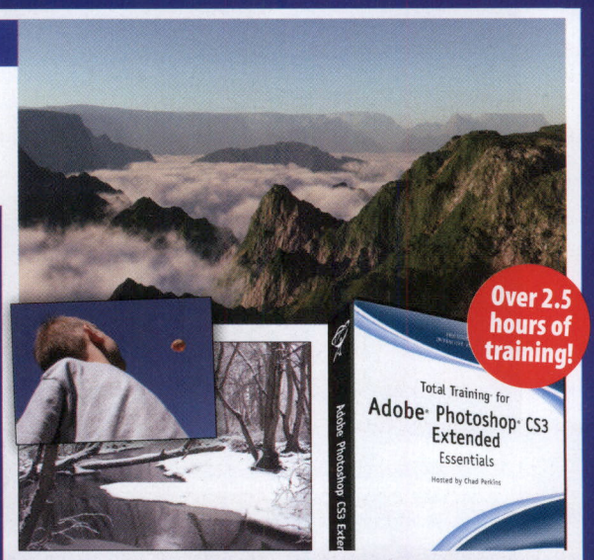
full learning edition

VUE 6 INFINITE PLE
Learn to create stunning 3D worlds with E-on Software's powerful design and animation suite for Mac and Windows

Creative Suite 3 training
Learn the new versions of Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, and Flash with video tutorials from Total Training

20 hi-res stock photos
Our exclusive collection of royalty-free A3 images from iStockphoto, which are on themes of food and seasons

Creative showcase
Check out the best of this month's motion media: including music videos, ads, animations, and short films



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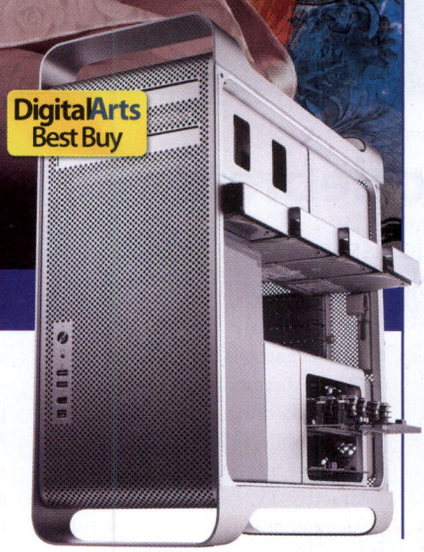

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BIMA set to celebrate the best in interactive design

The British Interactive Media Association is seeking your creative interactive work for entry to its industry-leading 2007 BIMA Awards - and Digital Arts magazine is playing host to the glittering event to be held in November 2007.

The British Interactive Media Association is calling for entries to its prestigious BIMA Awards – billed as the 'Oscars' for interactive design.

The Awards, which celebrate the best interactive work across the UK's new media industry, will take place in November 2007. The Awards are open to developers, producers, publishers, distributors and clients – and the entry deadline is July 31, 2007.

Now in its 23rd year, the BIMAs are the only awards in the UK that are significantly focused on creativity. Past winners have included the likes of Unit9, LBi, the BBC, Lateral, Red Bee Media, AKQA, Atticmedia, and R/GA.

Awards categories include best use of mobile, best Web site, best interactive advertising, best use of interactive TV, and most astounding achievement in accessibility. A full list of categories can be found at **www.bima.co.uk**.

This year, the BIMA Awards are being held in conjunction with Digital Arts – with the magazine hosting the Awards night and offering support and advice for entrants over the coming months.

"Years ago when I started out in the design industry winning a BIMA was one of the highest accolades your work could receive – it's always been something to be proud of," says BIMA Awards chair Matthew Bagwell. "For 2007, we want to focus on acknowledging and rewarding the creativity in the work submitted, and we have introduced a Craft Award to specifically highlight the skill of the designer, animator, coder or copywriter. Similarly, we'll acknowledge some of the brilliant work that is being done in the field of social software – from blogs and RSS to podcasting and forums."

The Awards' call for entries runs until July 31, 2007, with nominations announced in September. A separate call for judges will be announced shortly – previous judges have included creative directors and leading figures from across the UK's interactive industry. Full entry details are at **www.bima.co.uk**.

Last year's BIMA Awards Grand Prix winner was student Nick Goward for his site Big Balloon Race – an unprecedented move that saw a student beat off established agency and studio entries.

RHINOFX created the title sequence for new thriller *Perfect Stranger*, using digital matte paintings, complex CGI layering, and custom fractal generation software

Apple adds Color to Final Cut Studio

NAB in Las Vegas saw Apple roll out the latest update to its flagship video suite, with new colour grading tool, a new format and the addition of a 3D workspace to Motion.

Apple has updated its Final Cut Studio suite of video tools. Final Cut Studio 2 upgrades Final Cut Pro, Motion, SoundTrack Pro and Compressor – and adds a colour-grading application called Color.

Final Cut Pro 6 introduces the ProRes 422 format, a compressed 10-bit 4:2:2 HD format for post-production that Apple claims offers file sizes and data rates comparable to SD video while maintaining the quality of uncompressed HD.

Apple says that ProRes 422 is designed for improved performance on multi-core computers such as Apple's Mac Pro 8-core – and that the format will be supported in cameras from Panasonic and Sony.

The NLE gains the SmoothCam image-stabilization function, which removes camera shake and other unwelcome movement. It gains the ability to add video to 'drop zones' in embedded Motion projects and edit text in them.

Color is based on Silicon Colour's FinalTouch, which Apple acquired last year. It's an advanced colour-grading tool with a 32-bit floating-point 4:4:4 colour space. It features colour-correction tools based around gamma, lift and gain adjustments – as well as custom red, green, blue and luminance curves. It offers secondary colour-correction tools with mattes and vignettes to limit how effects are applied, a full set of scopes and 20 'looks' that can be manipulated to fit your project.

Cor!
Read Digital Arts review of Apple's Mac Pro 8-core workstation, including benchmarks, on page 64 of this issue.

Motion control

Motion 3 adds a 3D workspace to Apple's motion-graphics application, with cameras and lights – and Motion's dynamic Behaviour-based system has been updated to work in three dimensions. New vector paint tools offer 150 brush styles, 3D looks, and support for painting with video clips and Wacom tablets – and as it is vector-based, it can be edited afterwards.

2D motion tracking and match-moving tools are included in Motion 3, as is SmoothCam for image stabilization. Other additions include audio synchronization, retiming, and the Advanced Keyframe Editor.

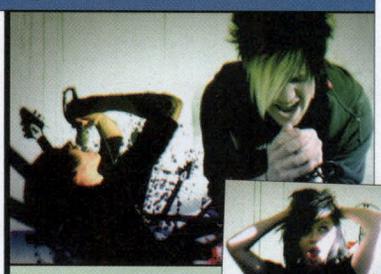
SoundTrack Pro 2 gains multi-track audio editing, improved tools for timing audio, and surround-sound design tools. It ships with over 5,000 sound effects including 1,000 surround-sound effects. Compressor 3 adds drag-&-drop presets, and dynamic filters such as timecode display and watermarks.

Final Cut Studio 2 costs £723 plus VAT, with upgrades costing £280 plus VAT. The suite also includes DVD Studio Pro 4.1, which has not been upgraded.

www.apple.com/uk

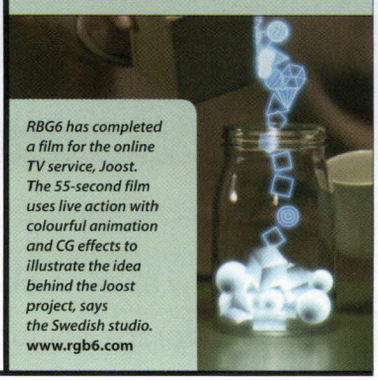
Final Cut got served

Alongside Final Cut Studio 2, Apple has introduced Final Cut Server, a server application for post houses that takes care of asset management and workflow automation. The server offers asset cataloguing with standard metadata format support, searching through a cross-platform client, an approval system, and customizable templates. Final Cut Server costs £550 plus VAT for one server and up to ten licences, or £1,105 plus VAT for one server and unlimited licences.

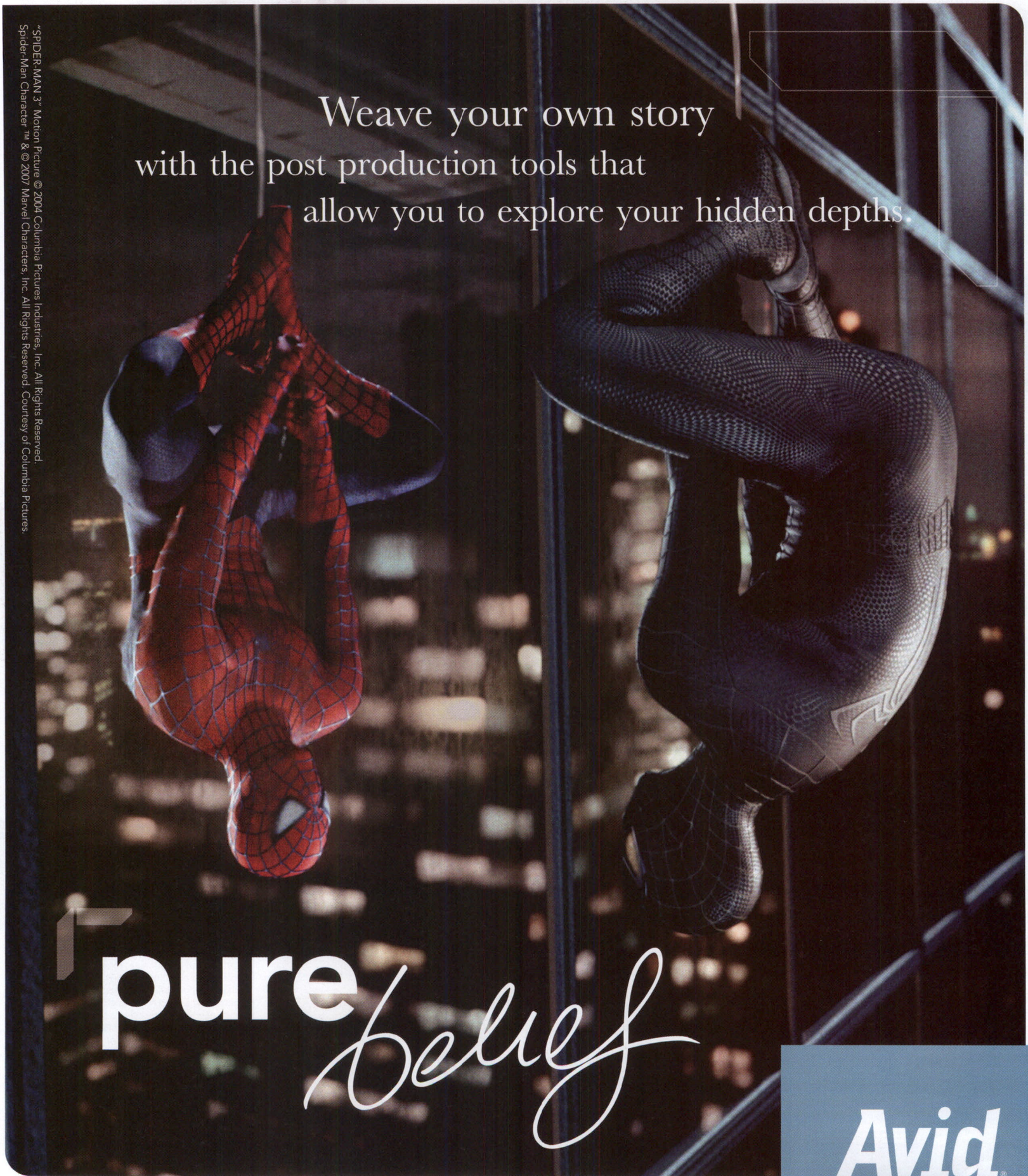


Eyeframe has completed a 30-second TV spot for EMAP and Kerrang Television on a weekly broadcast campaign set to last for a year. The brief was to create a TV spot that needed to communicate with an audience of 14-16 year olds and reference the MySpace Community. It used After Effects, Premiere and Photoshop. **www.eyeframe.co.uk**

San Francisco agency Mekanism has designed, created, and animated a series of characters and storylines set in a BP-branded environment to support a global integrated branding effort. The animated characters will be used across the firm's marketing and advertising efforts, including their likeness produced on a series of products distributed by BP. The campaign called for a strong, simple, almost 1960's-style design scheme that would stand out on television. **www.mekanism.com**



RBG6 has completed a film for the online TV service, Joost. The 55-second film uses live action with colourful animation and CG effects to illustrate the idea behind the Joost project, says the Swedish studio. **www.rgb6.com**



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Visit **www.avid.co.uk** to learn more about the editing, finishing, and shared storage solutions used to create the feature film, *Spider-Man 3*.

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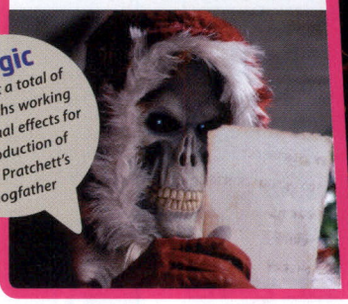
creative awards

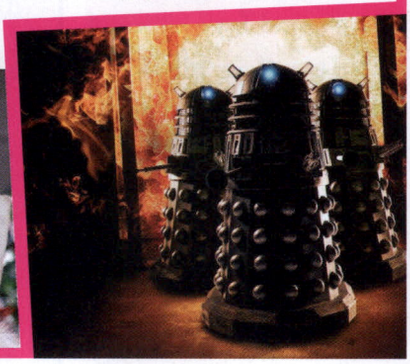
BAFTA Awards honour television craft

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts has revealed the winners of its annual Television Craft Awards, which it says celebrates the unsung heroes behind the camera and in post-production studios. The glittering event was held in London in April, and now in its eighth year, saw gongs handed out for categories such as production design, lighting, sound, and visual effects.

The Award for best visual effects went to MPC for its work on Sky One's *Terry Pratchett's Hogfather*, beating the likes of The Mill's work on *Doctor Who*. Much of MPC's work on the project involved creating the fantasy characters described in the book, including The Sock Eater, death of rats, five different types of hog and Discworld - a planet riding on the back of four elephants and a giant turtle. Each of the different characters required different skin textures, such as fur, skin or clothes, according to MPC. Other winners included Nickelodeon for its interactive *Me:TV* in the New Media Developer category. *Match Of The Day's FIFA World Cup 2006* scooped the top prize in the Titles category.



Magic
MPC spent a total of four months working on the visual effects for the production of Terry Pratchett's Hogfather



Boris Blue adds 3D images to Avid

Boris FX has debuted Boris Blue 2.0 – a real-time 3D motion graphics solution that adds Avid plug-in support, and additional features for composing effects in 3D, plus new deformers and filters.

Boris Blue 2.0 is the first version of the software to be made available as an AVX plug-in for Avid systems. It offers a sophisticated real-time particle engine and the ability to create effects using 3D models in the Avid timeline. AVX plug-in integration eliminates the export and import of projects, which Boris FX says simplifies the online/offline workflow. Additionally, Blue effects can now be saved into Avid bins for re-use.

New tools include improved 3D interactors for objects, cameras, lights and split views. Users can simultaneously display and work with multiple perspectives of the 3D Scene in the Composite Window, which Boris FX says makes it faster to create sophisticated 3D animation.

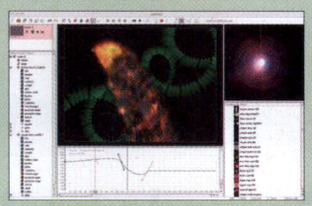
Boris Blue 2.0 began shipping mid-April for $995 (around £505). Boris Red owners can add Boris Blue 2.0 for $295 (£150). Existing Boris Blue owners will be able to download the update for free from www.borisfx.com.

Magic Bullet shoots out

Red Giant Software has launched Magic Bullet Looks, which applies film styles to video in After Effects, Final Cut Pro, Motion, Premiere Pro, and Avid systems. Red Giant says that the new user interface makes it much easier to create Looks and has 32 tools for doing everything from simple exposure adjustment to radical colour changes. It will ship this summer, priced at $399.

ParticleIllusion 3.0

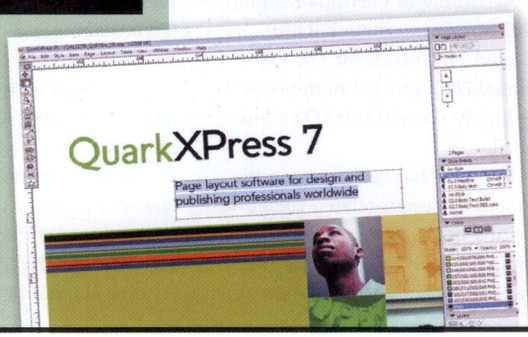
Wondertouch has released a Universal Binary version of its ParticleIllusion 3.0 software for Mac OS X. ParticleIllusion 3.0.5 is a free update that runs natively on both Intel- and Power PC-based Mac computers, and contains numerous bug fixes. Wondertouch says that it delivers a 10 to 20 per cent speed improvement.
www.wondertouch.com



Turbo Mask

Paravue has announced Turbo Mask, an image-masking tool that work with Adobe Photoshop CS3. It says that Turbo Mask works like the human eye to pick out the subject in an image, and understands images, isolating subjects and removing them from backgrounds. Paravue Turbo Mask will begin shipping in late May 2007 for $249.

Quark has released QuarkXPress 7.2, the latest free update to its graphic design and multi-channel page layout application. The update includes improvements in Job Jackets, Flattening and changes to QuarkXPress' Colour Management Module.
www.quark.co.uk

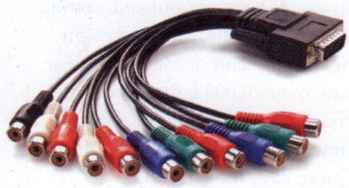


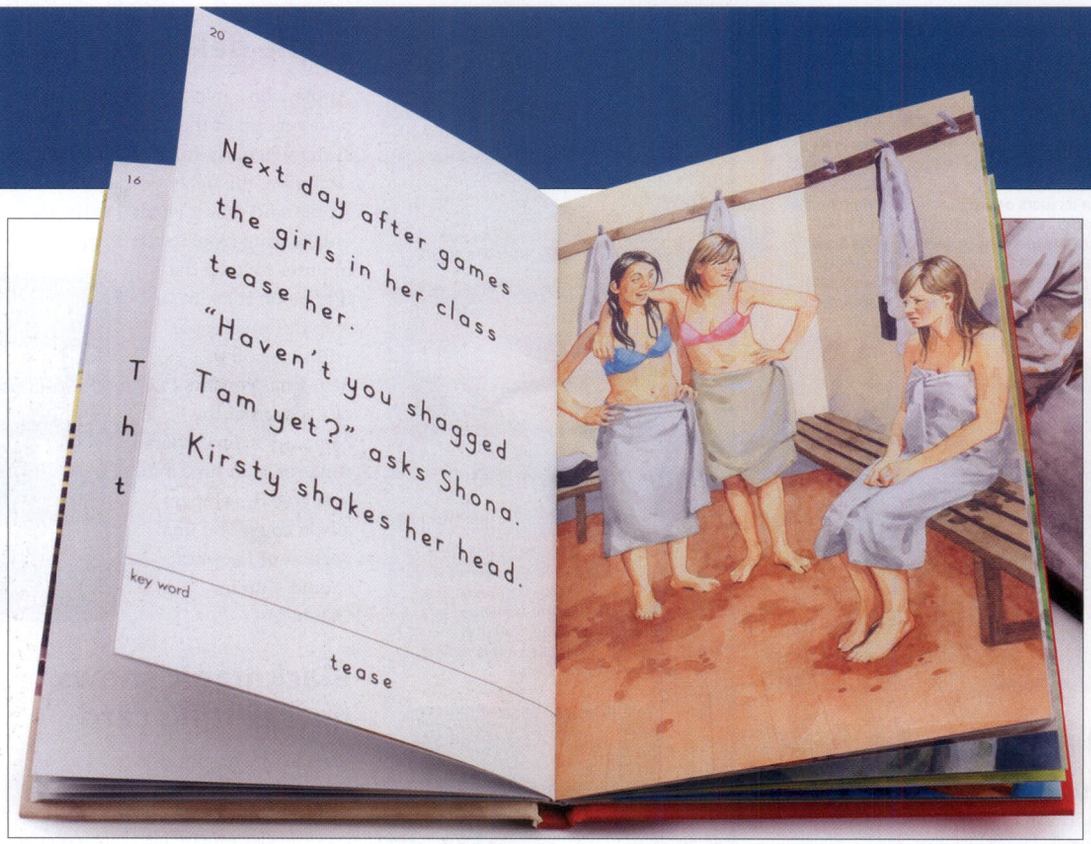
Apple delays Leopard

Apple won't release Leopard, the next version of the Mac operating system, in early June as planned – blaming the delay on the iPhone. Apple said that it needed software engineering from its OS X team in order to keep the iPhone on track to ship in June. Apple will show off a near-final version of Leopard at the company's developers conference in June and will give developers a beta copy. The final version of Leopard should ship in October.

Blackmagic shows new editing card

Blackmagic has introduced Intensity Pro – a high-definition editing card for Mac-using video pros. Costing $349, it is an HDMI-equipped editing card with analog compatibility. Designed for PCI Express-based Macs or PCs, the card features two HDMI connectors and an analog interface for connecting to component, NTSC, PAL and S-Video devices for capture and playback.
www.blackmagic-design.com




20
Next day after games the girls in her class tease her.
"Haven't you shagged Tam yet?" asks Shona.
Kirsty shakes her head.
key word
tease

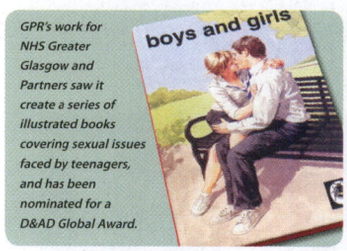
D&AD Global Awards hail design work

Record nominations for the creative awards sees a surge in design-related work, including graphic design, photography and gaming, as entries soar to 25,000.

The nominees for D&AD Global Awards 2007 have been announced, setting the scene for the winners event held at the end of May. This year saw over 25,000 entries from 58 countries, including for the first time Bangladesh, La Réunion, and Qatar, says the D&AD.

According to the organization, a 292-strong international jury selected 715 entries for The D&AD Annual 2007 and 151 nominees for the highly revered D&AD Yellow Pencil.

This year has seen a rise in the number of design-related categories – with a noteworthy number of nominations in the categories of Graphic Design (11 nominations), Photography (seven), and Gaming (six). US brands Skittles and Combos, and UK charity The Prince's Trust were the judges' favourites, with four nominations each, according to the D&AD.



GPR's work for NHS Greater Glasgow and Partners saw it create a series of illustrated books covering sexual issues faced by teenagers, and has been nominated for a D&AD Global Award.

"Despite the enormity of this task, our judges were meticulous in evaluating absolutely everything. They upheld D&AD's tough creative standards throughout. It is this combination of passion and rigour that lifts the D&AD Global Awards above others. And now we're delighted to reveal and celebrate the best creative work of the year from around the world," said Paula Taylor, D&AD Awards director.

Nominations are available to view in an online showcase at **www.dandad.org/awards2007**. They will also be on show at Old Billingsgate, London, during D&AD Congress Week Two (May 21-24).

The Yellow and Black Pencil winners will be revealed on May 24, 2007, during an evening Awards event. **www.dandad.org**

£5,000 prize in Global Cool film competition

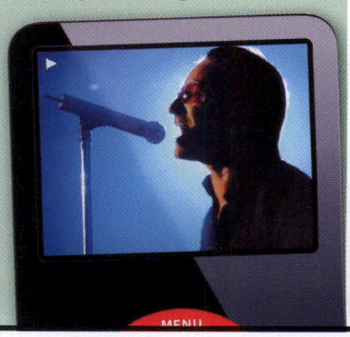
Climate change charity Global Cool has launched a competition that offers aspiring filmmakers the chance to showcase their talent and win up to £5,000. Filmmakers are asked to create a five-minute short across any genres from live action to animation.

The contest will run until June 30 and the public will vote for each film. The ten most voted for films will receive a cash prize. Cash prizes are also available for the top five reviews, so budding critics can log on to the Web site via **globalcool.org** to post comments about their favourite clips. Filmmakers will also receive a weekly update on their individual chart position.

Design Museum enjoys 25 years of design

This year marks 25 years since the opening of the Boilerhouse, the original incarnation of the Design Museum. To celebrate the anniversary, the Design Museum has invited 25 designers to select an object that they believe represents the best, or the most characteristic design of the period.

From the 1983 Alessi Whistling Kettle, to the 2001 iPod designed by Jonathan Ive for Apple, the 25 selected designs, representing the best of industrial design, graphics, furniture, and fashion, designed or first manufactured between 1982 and 2007, will be exhibited at the Design Museum in a programme called *25/25 – Celebrating 25 Years of Design.* It will run to June 22, 2007. **www.designmuseum.org**

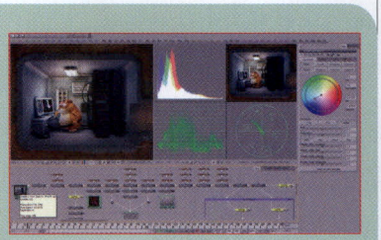


JON PEDDIE RESEARCH reckons the digital content creation (DCC) market is set for global annual compound growth of ten per cent until 2012

Digital Anarchy in cartoon art launch

Digital Anarchy has debuted a plug-in for After Effects, Final Cut Pro and Photoshop that makes photographs and video look like cartoon animation. The company says that ToonIt! uses advanced algorithms from Toonamation to create cartoon shading and lines. Users can customize the 'toon' effect with a selection of styles.
www.digitalanarchy.com

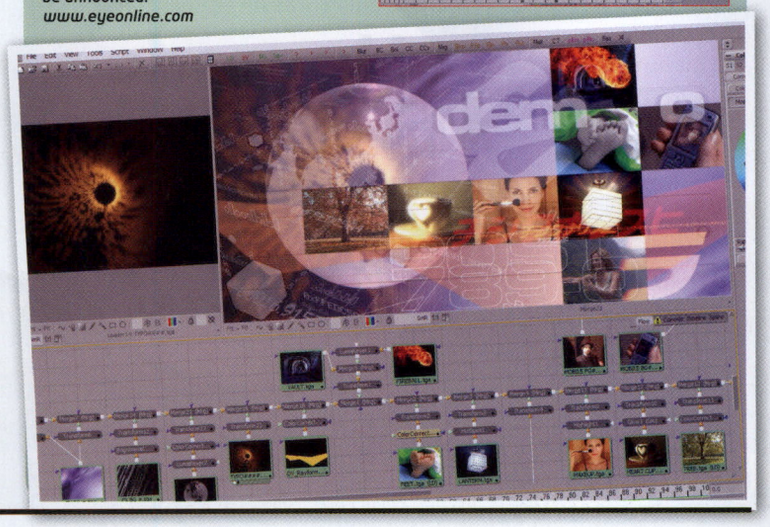
Eyeon launches Vision

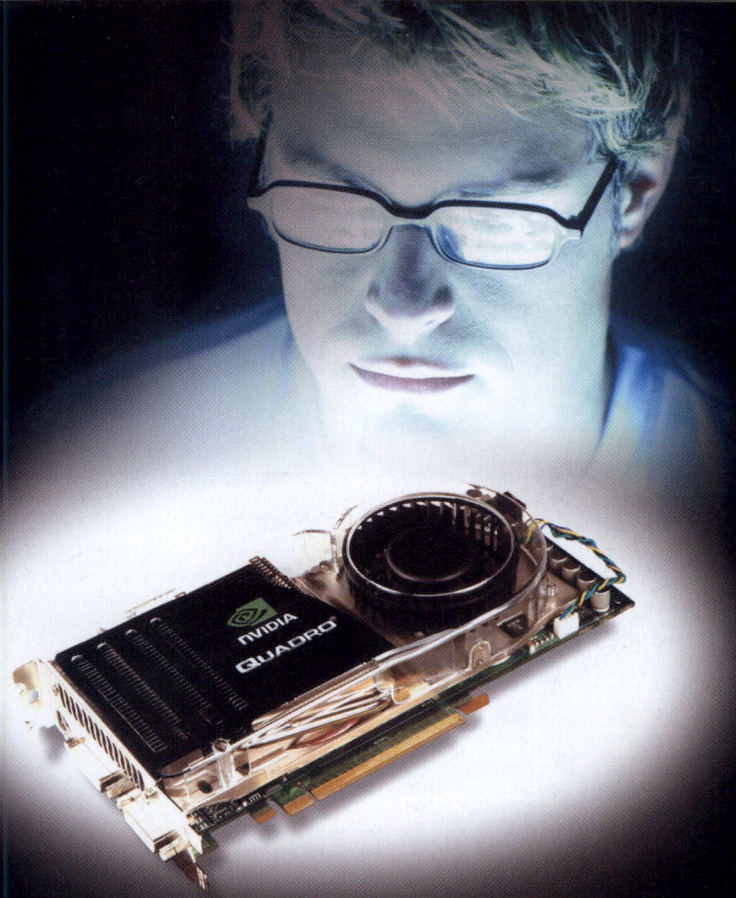


Eyeon has announced Vision, a tool for motion-graphics creation in the broadcast industry that goes head-to-head with tools such as Adobe's After Effects.

Eyeon says Vision uses a node-based workflow where scenes are built out of a flowchart of media and effects. It includes a motion graphics-based titling engine, an integrated particle system, and a paint and retouching system - plus integrated tracking and image stabilization, chroma keying and matte manipulation, and warping and image manipulation tools.

Vision offers a 16-bit image system with support for SD and HD colour systems. Extensive colour tools include multiple colour correctors, colour grade matching tools, a colour legalization system, and vectorscope and waveform monitoring. Pricing for Vision has yet to be announced.
www.eyeonline.com





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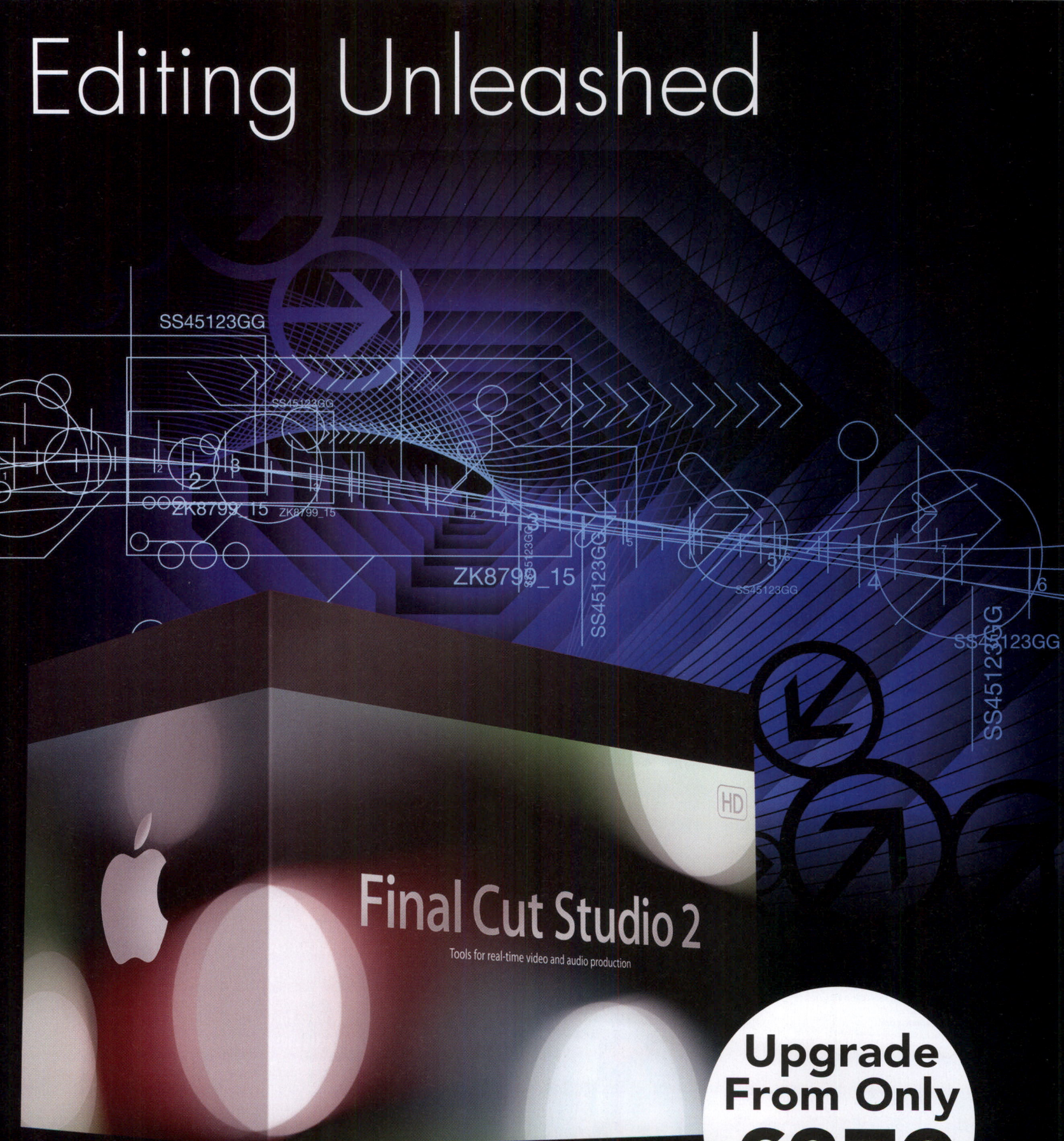

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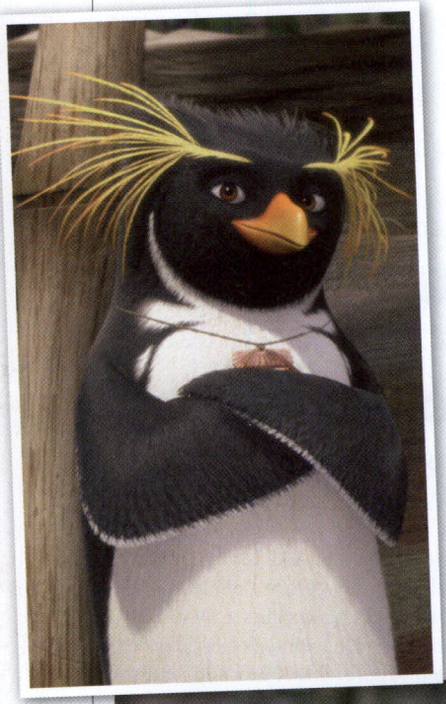
UP AGAINST IT is a new public art competition that will see the winning work viewed by London commuters. Find out more at www.upagainstit.com

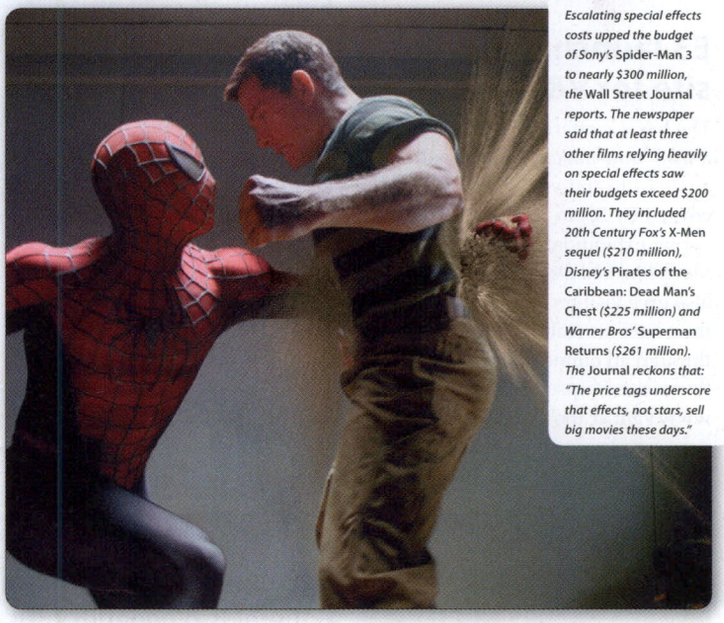
Aardman and Sony in line to sign three-year picture deal



Aardman Features, known for its popular animated films including *Wallace & Gromit* is in final negotiations to enter into a three-year deal with Sony Pictures Entertainment.

The deal will bring together Aardman's animation expertise and Sony's global production, marketing and distribution operation. The deal complements the slate of programming being created by Sony Pictures Animation, which is set to release the CG feature *Surf's Up* (pictured).

Sony Pictures Entertainment co-chairman Amy Pascal said: "We have been huge fans of Aardman films for a long time and this deal greatly expands Sony's commitment to animation in the worldwide marketplace. Aardman makes movies with lively humour, great stories, and fun distinctive visuals. We couldn't be more excited about working with the entire Aardman team."



Escalating special effects costs upped the budget of Sony's Spider-Man 3 *to nearly $300 million, the* Wall Street Journal *reports. The newspaper said that at least three other films relying heavily on special effects saw their budgets exceed $200 million. They included 20th Century Fox's* X-Men *sequel ($210 million), Disney's* Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest *($225 million) and Warner Bros'* Superman Returns *($261 million). The* Journal *reckons that: "The price tags underscore that effects, not stars, sell big movies these days."*

Microsoft flashes Silverlight tool

Microsoft has unveiled Silverlight, a new Mac and PC-compatible Web plug-in that provides interactive Web capabilities similar to Adobe Flash, with streaming video capabilities superior to Apple QuickTime, it says.

Silverlight lets content creators incorporate video and animation into their Web content. It provides a method for displaying vector-based graphics, text, animation, media and overlays. Silverlight doesn't require any special back-end Web environment to deploy – it integrates with existing infrastructure tools such as Apache and PHP, JavaScript and XHTML.

Silverlight is targeted at content providers who want to distribute video and rich media on the Web, and designers and developers working with interactive applications, says Microsoft. The software works on the Mac using either Mozilla Firefox or Apple's own Safari Web browser. On Windows, it also supports Microsoft's Internet Explorer 7.

www.microsoft.com

Adobe targets Microsoft with its own media player offering

Adobe has revealed its first desktop media player – a desktop application that will let content owners embed ads in clips that user can play back offline. Adobe is already a major player in the market for online video with its ubiquitous Flash player – and it hopes to extends its presence with Adobe Media Player.

The ability to let consumers "download and carry" ad-supported videos and play them back offline makes the product an important one for media companies, which already use Flash to distribute nearly 90 per cent of their content, an analyst said.

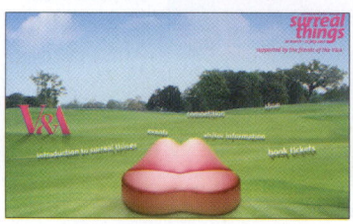
"It provides a way to share media and make money, which until now has been a scary proposition for most media companies," said James McQuivey, a principal analyst of media technology at Forrester Research.

Adobe Media Player will be available at an unspecified time this year as a free download in its beta version, while general availability is expected before the end of the year. It was built using Adobe's new Apollo application runtime.

Among its features are a high-quality Flash playback, full screen playback, viewer ratings and a "favourites" feature.

E3 launches surreal site for V&A show

The V&A is offering its visitors a truly unusual experience, with a microsite and viral campaign, created by E3, to support its major spring exhibition, *Surreal Things: Surrealism and Design*. The site will also give visitors a chance to create their own surreal 'work of art' through an online version of the 'Exquisite Corpse' game.
www.vam.ac.uk/surrealthings

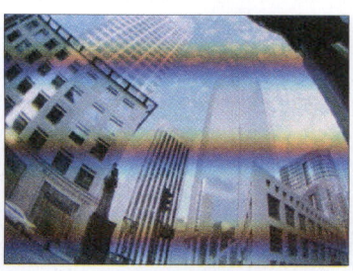


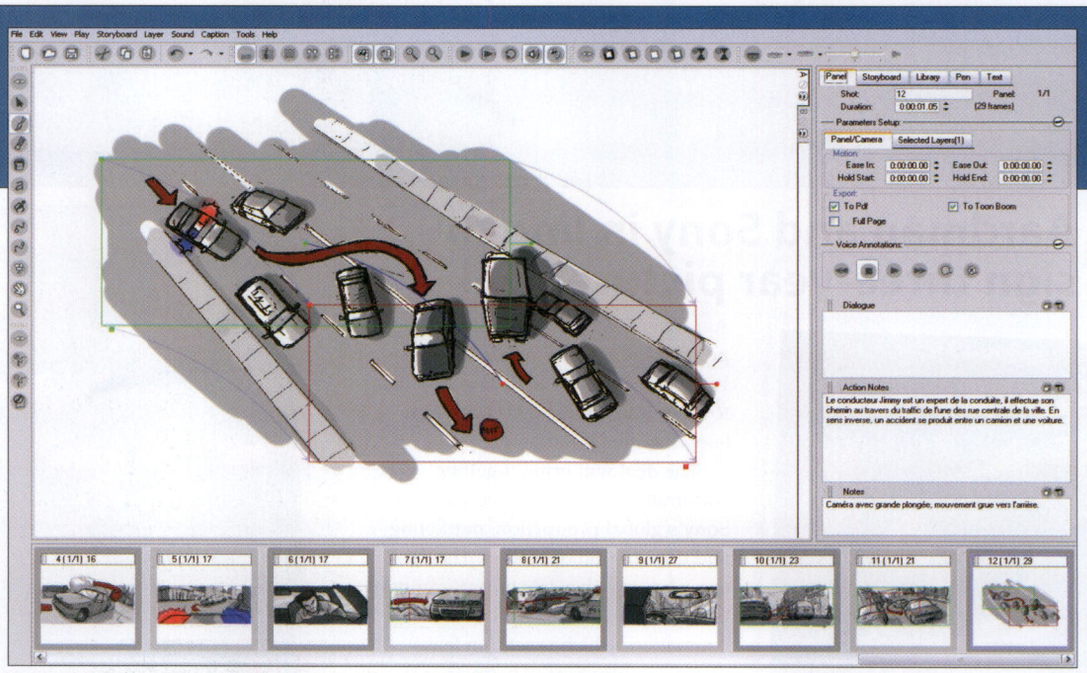
Boris FX Continuum Complete 5.0 shown

Boris FX has launched version 5.0 of its Boris Continuum Complete collection of plug-ins for Adobe, Apple, Autodesk and Avid systems.

BCC 5.0 now supports software running on Intel-based Macs. The release offers native support for Apple FXPlug and Avid AVX 2.0, plus Adobe's Creative Suite 3.

New tools include pan and scan controls, up-res conversions, integrated motion tracking, and accelerated Open GL effects.
www.borisfx.com





Toon Boom rewrites the story

Creative-software maker Toon Boom Animation releases Storyboard Pro - and heralds a paperless system aimed at filmmakers and motion-graphics artists.

Toon Boom Animation has announced the release of Storyboard Pro. The software costs $799.99 (around £407).

Storyboarding is a popular way for creatives involved in visual communication – filmmakers, videographers, advertising creatives and others – to visualize how they're going to shoot their work. A series of panels depicts scenes, outlines rough copies and describe camera shots.

Storyboard Pro is a paperless system that mimics the traditional storyboard process, using a Mac or PC and a graphic tablet. It features a multi-layer drawing engine that lets you use an "onion skinning" technique for creating key poses, a draw-behind mode so you can paint behind contour lines, layer merge and flip drawing support.

Storyboard Pro will work with Photoshop files, and offer PDF support and time-code stamping.

You can export your storyboards to AAF for integration with Avid or Adobe Premiere-based editing systems, CSV export for spreadsheet integration, import and export with Photoshop, with layer maintenance, PDF support, foreign languages and time-code stamping.

System requirements call for Mac OS X 10.4, G5 or Intel-based Mac, Windows XP, 512MB RAM, 110MB hard disk space, ATI or nVidia graphics with at least 128MB VRAM, 1,280-x-1,024 resolution. For more information see the Toon Boom Web site.
www.toonboom.com

RTSquare rendering engine boost Maya

GPU-Tech has released a version of its RTSquare rendering engine for Maya. Previously a plug-in for 3ds Max and Viz, RTSquare is a GPU-based renderer that uses new shader technology to quickly render images. Users can reduce rendering time by 10 to 50 times, according to GPU-Tech.

RTSquare for Maya is integrated into Autodesk Maya. It uses standard materials so as not to disrupt workflow, and GPU-Tech says that it will run on a PC with a Pixel Shader 2.0 graphic card. Features include soft shadows with up to 256 samples, reflections on multiple levels, refractions, reflection and refraction caustics, Global Illumination,and cartoon rendering.

A free non-commercial version can be downloaded from **www.gputech.com**.

Image by Lucion

NewTek launches Lightwave Rendition

NewTek has launched LightWave Rendition for Adobe Photoshop, a plug-in for Photoshop CS3 Extended. The company says that the plug-in offers photorealistic rendering of files created using 3D layers, which debuted in the new version of the image-editing software.

3D layers allow 3D models to be imported into Photoshop CS3 Extended, positioned and incorporated into artwork. NewTek says that LightWave Rendition supports all of the model formats that can be imported: including 3DS, OBJ, U3D, KMZ and Collada. The plug-in will ship with a library of 3D models.

All of these properties of these formats are rendered in high-resolution: including textures and lighting attributes, according to NewTek. They can then be composited into the rest of the scene or a piece of artwork using Photoshop's standard set of Apply Modes for a variety of creative effects.

No release date has been announced for LightWave Rendition, which will cost $149 (around £74) when it ships. Potential users can sign up to beta test the plug-in.
www.newtek-europe.com

Directing collective Brand New School has completed work on Doritos' *Bag Wars*, a darkly comedic stop-motion animation spot. Brand New School built the characters, and the artists created the characters to have a designer-toy vibe, reminiscent of Japanese-influenced characters. Over 100 characters were animated.
www.brandnewschool.com

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stock

VISIT WWW.DIGITALARTSONLINE.CO.UK FOR ALL THE LATEST STOCK COLLECTIONS

Elemental forces

Artbeats has released dozens of footage collections and single clips at the NAB show in Las Vegas, with many focusing on themes of energy, power, and life.

The collections include incendiary footage of a *Burning House*, and an HD version of the popular *Mayhem* set of breaking glass, splattering paint, and floating debris. In contrast, there are sets of plants in bloom (*Grow!* and *Timelapse Flowers 3*).

Other titles include *Lightning Storms*, *Storm Clouds 2*, *Code Rage*, *Protestants*, and *Catholics*.

www.artbeats.com

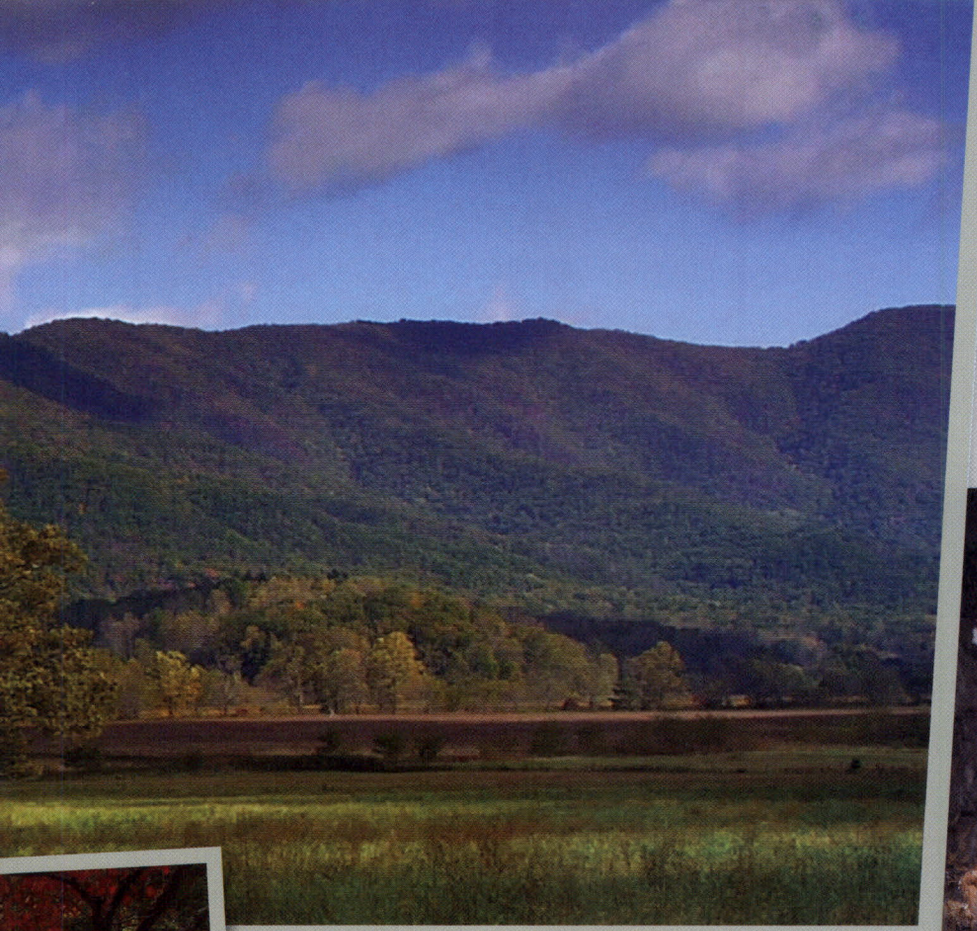
Mammoth gets wild

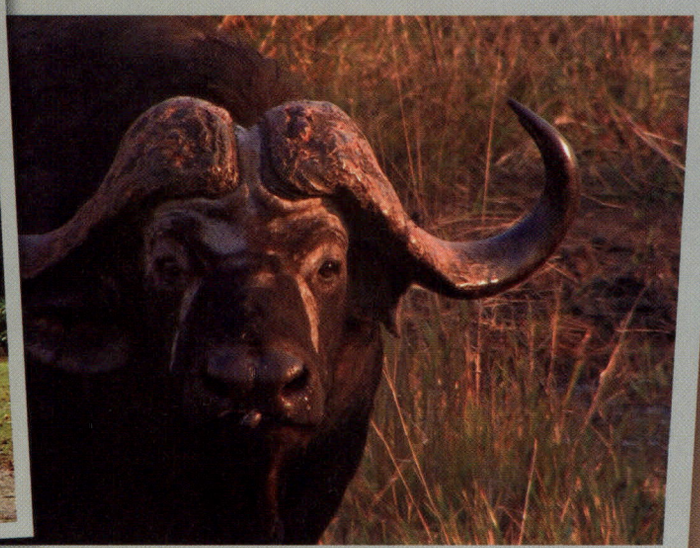
Footage library Mammoth HD has added royalty-free collections featuring a range of wildlife and scenes from the natural world.

The new sets include Wayne Crawford's *South Africa Series*, which offers high-definition footage of elephants, rhinos, cape buffalo and leopards. There's also Art Levy's *Moose Collection* and scenics from J Michael Media including *Great Smoky National Park in Autumn* and *Arches National Park*.

Bears of the Tongass, which includes over an hour of bears fishing in Alaska has been added to the rights-managed library.

www.mammothhd.com





Birdman of Finland

The Nature Picture Library has announced that it has signed an exclusive contract with Markus Varesvuo, the renowned Finnish bird photographer.

Varesvuo has been capturing images of birds since 1998, and has won numerous awards including International Wildbird Photographer of the Year in 2003.

The photographs added to the Nature Picture Library's collection include shots of barnacle geese, bearded tits, thrush nightingales, hawk owls, and black woodpeckers.

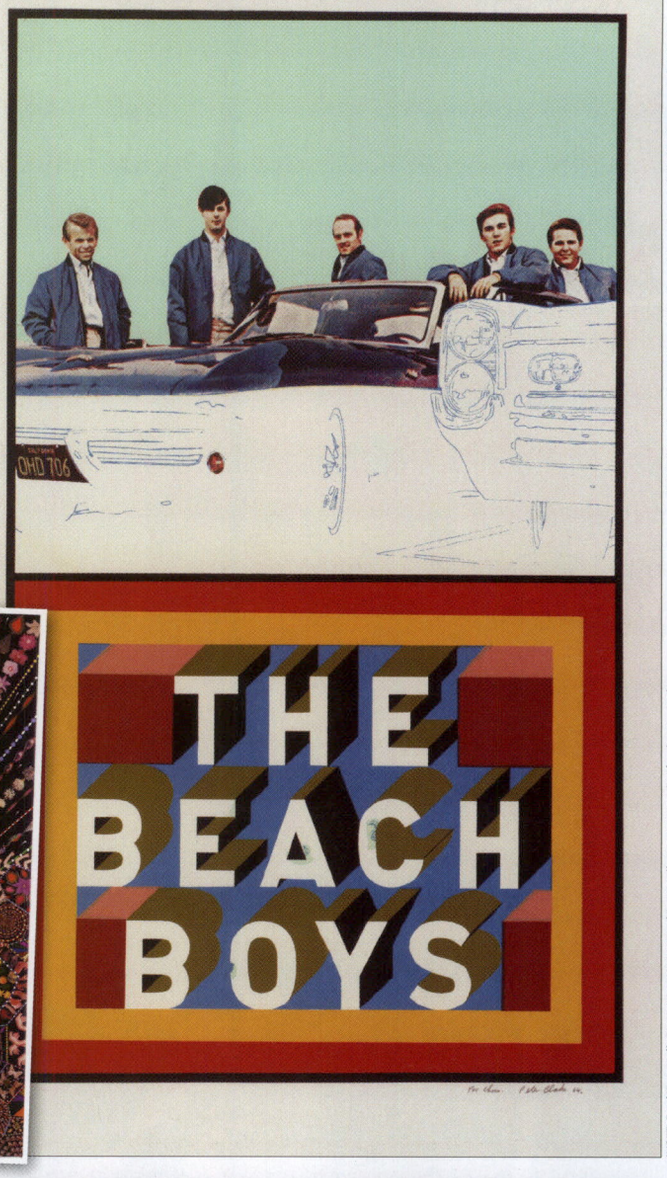
Varesvuo's photographs are available on a rights-managed basis.

www.naturepl.com

if everybody had an ocean

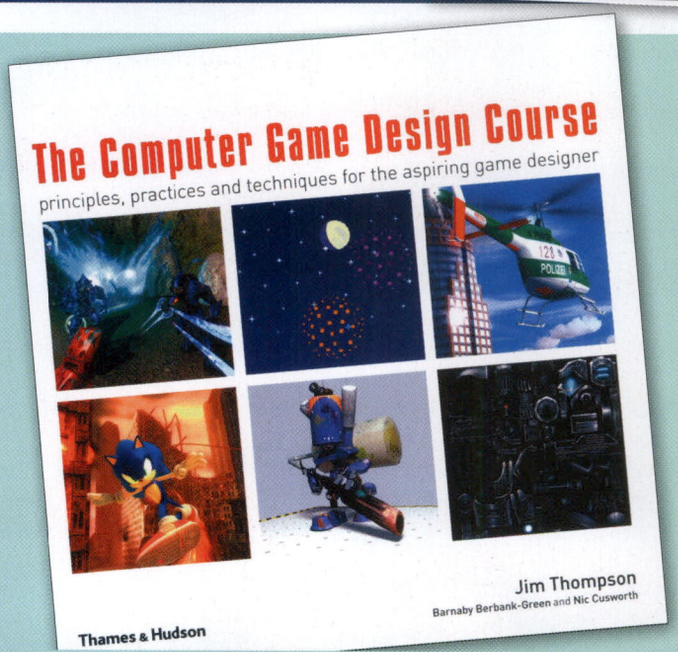
If you're planning a summer trip to Cornwall, don't miss Tate St Ives' new exhibition, which focuses on the life and music of Brian Wilson of The Beach Boys. Featuring the art, sculptures, installations, and films of 31 artists, *If Everybody Had an Ocean: Brian Wilson: An Art Exhibition* uses Wilson's music as a prism to offer unique perspectives on the 'California dream'. It explores the relationship between art, music, and popular culture in the 1960s, in relation to surf, cars, and Southern California as a mythical teenage utopia. Artists featured include Peter Blake, John Cage, Brian Calvin, Isa Genzken, Joe Goode, Raymond Pettibon, Ken Price, Bridget Riley, Allen Ruppersberg, Ed Ruscha, and Fred Tomaselli. It runs from May 26 to September 23.

www.tate.org.uk/stives



LEFT: Peter Blake, Beach Boys 1964, Tate © Peter Blake. All Rights Reserved, DACS 2007

INSET: Fred Tomaselli Organism 2005 © Fred Tomaselli. Courtesy carlier | gebauer, Berlin


The Computer Game Design Course
principles, practices and techniques for the aspiring game designer
Jim Thompson
Barnaby Berbank-Green and Nic Cusworth
Thames & Hudson

Ideal for the aspiring game designer looking to make it in today's computer games industry, this 192-page book by Jim Thompson is stuffed full of colour screengrabs and artwork, and step-by-step tutorials that take you through all aspects of designing and developing dynamic computer games. It covers game play conventions for a variety of platforms, the principles of linear and circular games, character design and animation, as well as creating levels and environments that will engage players. It costs £13.95.

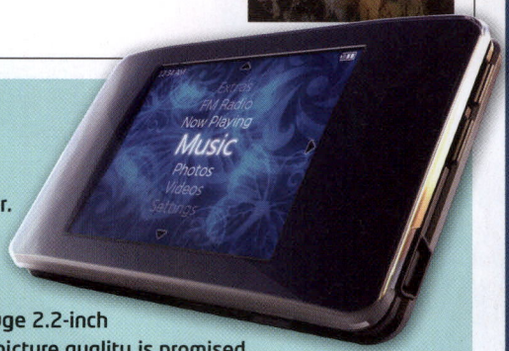
www.thameshudson.co.uk

Someone at Nokia HQ must have been having a Spandau Ballet moment when thinking up the Nokia 8800 Sirocco Gold. According to the company though, the new phone was inspired by the one of nature's most precious elements - gold. Encased in a 18-carat gold plating, it may be more Sunday-league than Premiership WAG, but the phone's still a looker thanks to the superb Nokia 8800 Sirocco styling. The case smoothly slides open to reveals a two-megapixel camera, scratch-resistant colour screen and ergonomic keypad. A coordinating desk stand and colour-matching Bluetooth headset are available. The phone costs €1,000.

www.nokia.co.uk

East London gallery Stolenspace is hosting a show from May 10-20 to launch a new book about Japan's Rackgaki scene. *Rackgaki: Japanese Graffiti* by publishers Laurence King, illustrates the art of the major graffiti artists working in Japan today. During the event, the book will be showcased, and its accompanying DVD will be shown. Graffiti artists Kress & Esow will be painting live at the gallery, and footage of graffiti being created will be shown, set to a soundtrack by some of Japan's leading trip-hop artists.

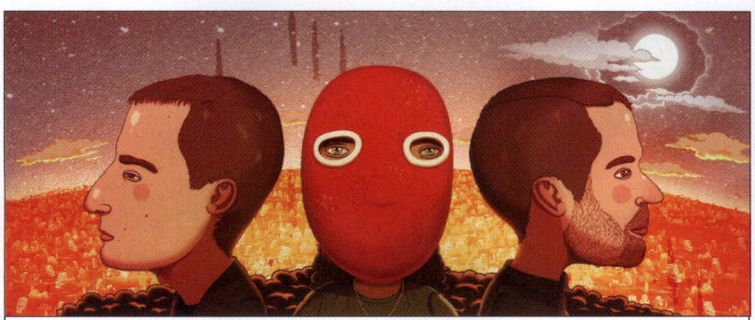
www.stolenspace.com



Clix 2

iRiver's popular Clix MP3 player has had a makeover. The iRiver Clix 2 is a 4GB MP3 player with FM radio tuner and recorder that also plays videos on its huge 2.2-inch colour screen. Crisp, clear picture quality is promised by the Clix 2 thanks to a screen resolution of 320-x-240 resolution and use of AMOLED technology. It sports the same intuitive navigation system as the previous version and has built-in Flash support so you can download and watch all types of Flash content from the Web. At only 13mm thick and boasting 24 hours music playback and five hours video playback, the Clix 2 combines looks and funtionality at a cost of £139.

www.amp3.co.uk



lovebytes rides again

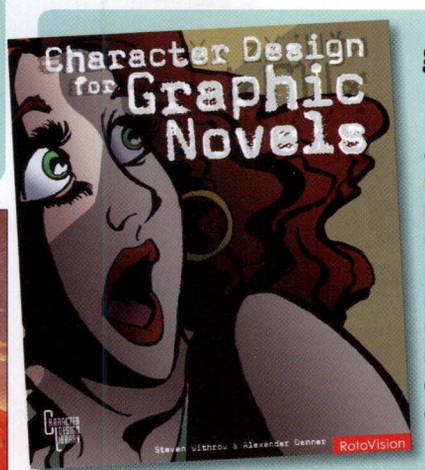
Lovebytes, the annual international festival of digital art, takes place this year in Sheffield, May 13-20. With a full programme based on all aspects of digital culture, the festival promises to showcase the work of the most exciting and forward-thinking pioneers of digital art and design. Events include audio and visual installations, live performances, talks, workshops, film screenings, and exhibitions of moving image and creative design. Digital creatives featured include Simon Warner, Caroline Locke, and Rose Butler, along with onedotzero's screening of *J-Star 06*. A programme of associated events will be held across the city to reflect Sheffield's burgeoning digital culture.

www.lovebytes.org.uk

Want a retro vibe for the studio or at home? Look no further than the X1 Jukebox, which combines traditional jukebox styling with the iPod's audio and video technology.

Thinking of buying a speaker system for your iPod? Forget small and streamlined - think big instead. The world's first iPod jukebox combines traditional jukebox design with the latest iPod audio and video technology. Just pop your iPod into the X1's cradle and you can watch video on the LCD screen, while audio is served up by a powerful three-way speaker system. Solidly-made in the UK by Sound Leisure, using real chrome die cast metal fittings and high strength bubble tubes and glass panels, the X1 uses LED lighting technology that allows users to change colours to suit individual environments and moods. Now stocked by Harrods, the X1 Jukebox costs £4,850.

www.xijukebox.co.uk



getting graphic

Featuring insights and advice from leading character designers, this book explores the creative process behind the creation of some of the most highly recognized graphic characters. Covering everything from design styles, methods, symbolism, expression, motivation, and the human form to tools and techniques, this £25 book is richly illustrated throughout with examples of sketches, storyboards and final artwork.

www.rotovision.com

showcase

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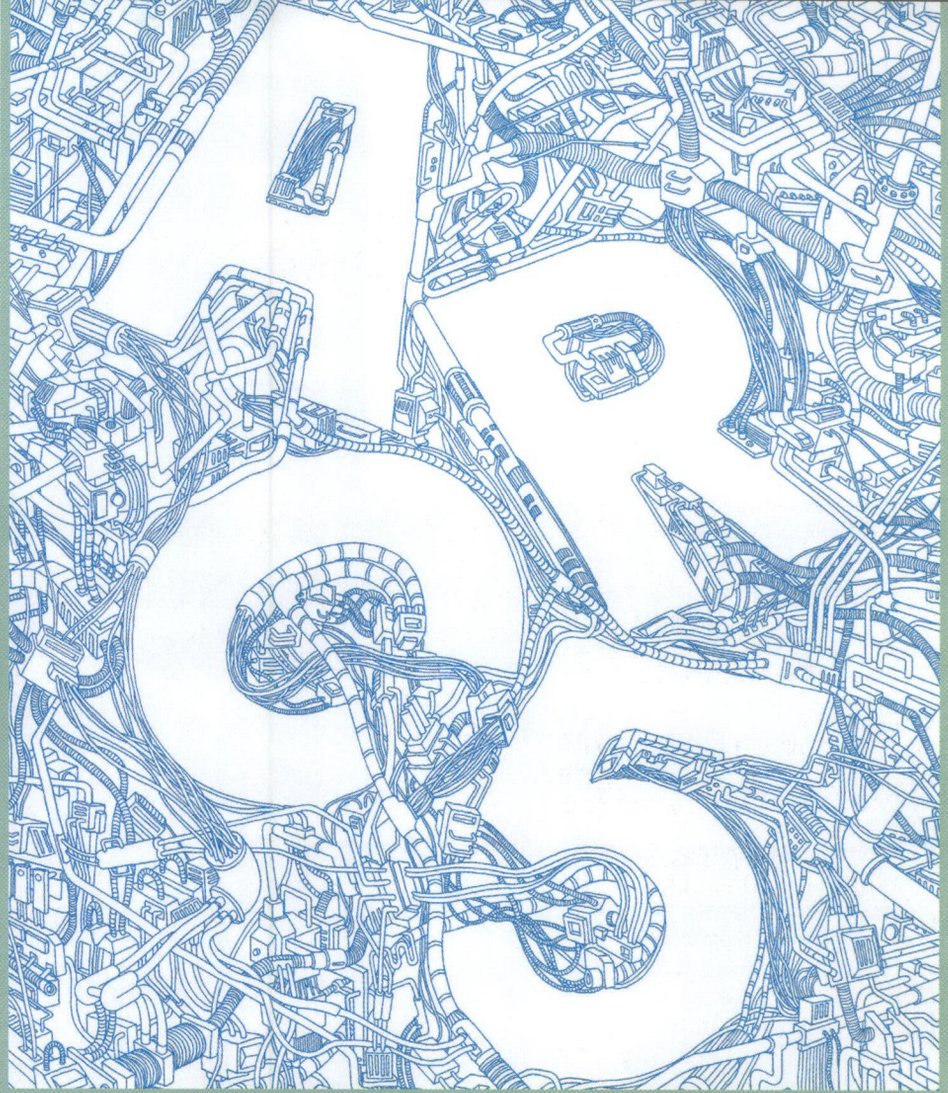
MURILO MACIEL

Murilo Maciel is a 26-year-old illustrator from Brazil. He's been working as a freelancer since November 2006 under the creative identity of GrafikDust.

"My style is very organic, mixing a lot of different media – photo, texture, handmade stuff, and vectors," he says. "I'm heavilly influenced by nature, movies, psychedelia, music, London (where I lived for three years), collages, and all the things that surround me."

e: *murilo@grafikdust.com*
w: *www.grafikdust.com*



ADAM HAYES

Adam Hayes was born in 1981 in Stoke-on-Trent. After graduating from the Royal College of Art in 2006 he began working from his studio on projects for himself, his friends, and for clients worldwide.

A lover of the outdoors, Hayes often enjoys fell walking, mountain biking and camping in the UK's beautiful countryside. This is reflected in his work where his designs are founded upon hand drawn and organic forms that mix with his interests in typography.

Despite all of this Hayes lives and works in London – a city that he says is big, dirty, and often unfriendly.

w: *www.mrahayes.co.uk*
e: *adam@mrahayes.co.uk*
t: *07786 578 245*

ANDREW GROVES

IMAKETHINGS is the name for Andrew Groves, is UK-born illustrator based in Kanagawa, Japan.

IMAKETHINGS has worked for clients all over the world. He has exhibited paintings and hand-made things in London and Tokyo, in solo shows and with the painting collective Primer, of which he is a founding member.

Recent projects include mobile phone wallpapers and graphics for a skateboard company. He hopes to have this work on his Web site soon.

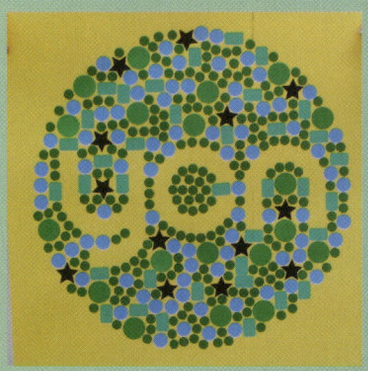
e: *andrew@imakethings.co.uk*
w: *www.imakethings.co.uk*

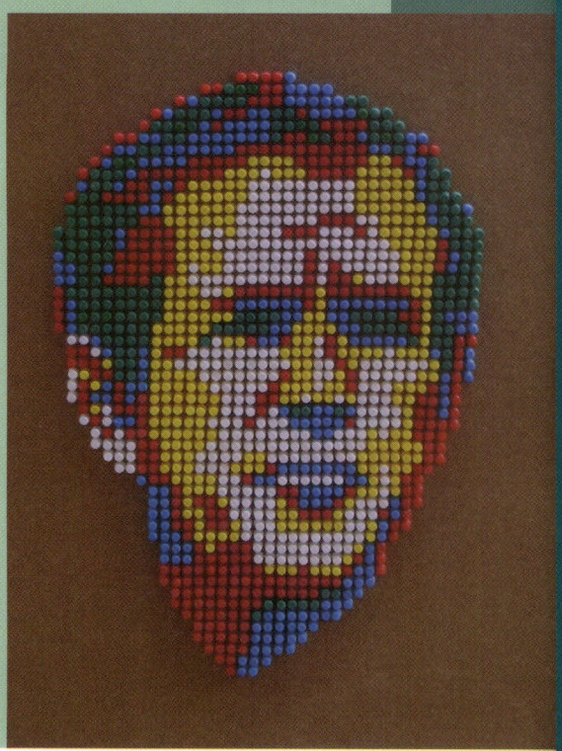
MELVIN GALAPON

Melvin Galapon has recently moved to London, and hails from a small town in the Northwest of England. He left university in 2003 and has since been developing his interest in recycling materials to construct images.

Galapon's work embraces playfulness and visual aesthetics. He has been featured in Semi Permanant 06 and *Riot* magazine in Australia, and was recently commissioned by the *New York Times*.

e: *mynameismelvin@gmail.com*
w: *www.mynameismelvin.co.uk*





ROMAIN CHEVALE

Romain Chevale has experience of working in both France and the UK, and he says this has given him a new approach to design. "I am mainly interested in editorial, fashion and illustration," he says. "I stand for innovation, fluidity, and fresh thinking."

His work includes design for art and cultural projects, as well as projects in the fashion and music industries. He has worked on catalogues, books, magazines, installations, posters and illustrations for editorial.

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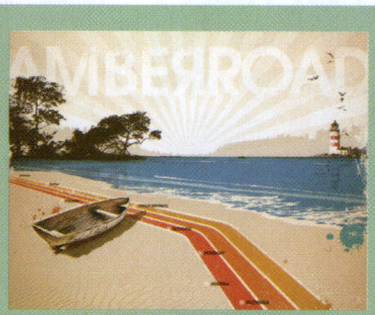

MEHMET GOZETLIK

Mehmet Gozetlik is senior art director at Zebra Design Factory in Istanbul. The company has created 360-degree marketing projects for clients such as Nike, Camper, G-Star, and JTI (Camel). He also works as a freelance designer.

"I use 3D and 2D design software at an advanced level, and I have experience of different platforms and media such as broadcast, print, and interactive," he says. "I believe design is my destiny. Please, open your wings and take a new 'breath'."

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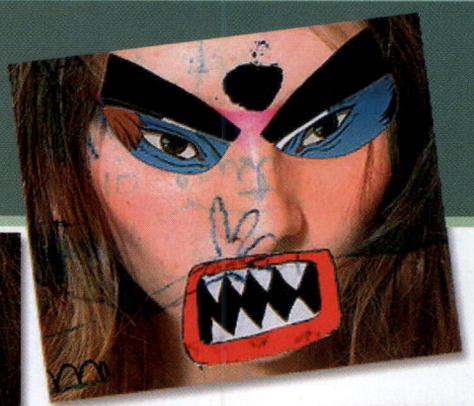

MARGARIDA GIRAO

Margarida Girao specializes in Web, multimedia, and graphic design.

Based in Portugal, Girao is available to work with any national and international corporate, advertising, magazine, and design campaigns.

As an illustrator, Girao uses digital and traditional methods such as pencil, collage, and photo illustration. Her work is well suited to children's picture books, fashion, and editorial.

She describes her style as "eclectic, bold, daring, creative, conceptual, colourful, vibrant, and professional".

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Promote
Yourself

Sell yourself

A creative pro makes a living from selling other people's brands - but you've got to sell your own too. Here's how.

words Sean Ashcroft **illustration** ilovedust

Designers are hardly renowned for their devastating sales skills – the caricature is someone plugged into an iPod ogling a Mac with unblinking eyes. But unless you learn how to pimp your skills out, your creative brilliance will reach a minimal audience, or worse, no audience at all.

If you're a shrinking violet when it comes to selling your work, getting your name known in such a saturated and competitive market will be a terrible struggle. Yet if cash and creative variety are important to you, you're going to have to put your name out there and sell your skills.

"Designers spend a lot of time convincing clients of the importance of self-promotion but we don't seem to be as good at it for ourselves," says Martin Roach, founder of multi-discipline information design consultancy Epitype (***www.epitype.co.uk***). But any old promotion won't do, stresses Roach. "You have to think of self-promotion in campaign terms, and one of the things we tell clients is if you're developing a campaign it's got to have the legs to carry it."

Few agencies have adopted the campaign approach to self-promotion more readily than Carbon Creative (***www.carboncreative.net***). "We promote the core values of our company first and our services second," says creative director Martin Hadfield. "When we started the company in 2002 we wanted to make an ethical commitment to become carbon neutral, and environmental sustainability is something we promote to clients and the supply chain."

The reality is that no one mode of promotion will always outperform another. Regardless of whether the approach is a mail shot, email, networking, presentations, or word of mouth, the crucial factors are that you know what you want, that you've researched your market, that your material is relevant to those who receive it, and that you execute your work with the self-same expertise and flair that you're trumpeting to prospects.

"You must make sure that you're proud of what you sent out," advises Brendan Thorpe, sales and marketing director with brand consultancy Springetts Design (***www.springetts.co.uk***). "There's no point rushing

And the winner is...

What designer hasn't dreamt of scooping a big design gong, amid raucous applause and the flash of cameras? The real glory, though, can come later - when publicity surrounding your award helps generate new business.

Becca Saraga reveals that the *Design Week* award Addiction won in 2004 for film and video graphics helped the company win clients from more diverse market sectors. "When we began we just did music ads, but after the award we won a lot more business from the broadcasting and advertising worlds," she says.

Brendan Thorpe of brand agency Springetts says awards can also be used as an effective self-promotional tool. "We won a design effectiveness award, and this is useful as a selling point in itself. After winning it, we produced a small mailer that gave some background to the winning project and told prospects: 'If you want us to do the same for you, give us a ring.'"

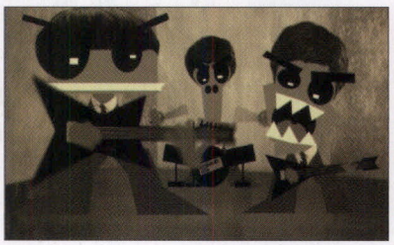
The publicity surrounding awards is great for companies, but the design and marketing press aren't interested only in awards, and savvy agencies know how to work the media to ensure regular exposure.

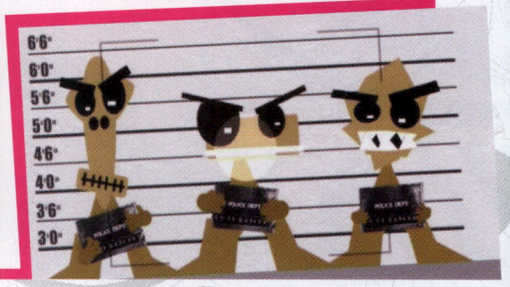
"The key to getting press coverage is finding the right person in the magazine you're talking to, and look to build some sort of relationship with them," says Thorpe, "Meet them and give them enough background on your company to make them interested in what you do. Also introduce them to a senior member of staff, such as the creative director, so that they've got a good voice to call on when they need someone to make a comment."

CASE STUDY:

Addiction

In 2004, London-based agency Addiction won the Design Week award for Best TV/Film Graphics, for the *Mop Tops* idents for Kerrang TV. The company, which previously specialized on music ads, found an increase in interest from clients in other market sectors as a result of the gong.





something out, because it has to represent what it is you are trying to promote."

Yet it's pointless something being beautifully conceived and executed if it lacks relevance for those who are receiving it.

Becca Saraga is head of client services with video and broadcast agency Addiction (*www.addiction.tv*), and says a one-size-fits-all approach just won't do.

"We have different sets of clients – record labels, broadcasters, advertising agencies, and corporate work – and when we promote ourselves we tailor it to that client base."

Small world

Saraga says that in Addiction's industry, the best approach is a personal one.

"Broadcasting is quite a small world," she says. "We have a PowerPoint presentation that shows our work, and we'll try to show them this in person. But with record labels, it's more about keeping in contact via the phone and showing them our latest work. We have an HTML newsletter that we'll send out if we've done a high-profile job."

For Clifford Boobyer, creative director and co-founder of design and branding agency Firedog (*www.firedog-design.co.uk*), it's all about striking a chord with your prospects. "Do some research and find out a little bit about your prospects. If you can get a little nugget to latch onto, you're in. Find out what they are like after hours, hobby wise, and aim there. Engage on a human level. Even the driest corporate communications manager has something human inside."

> It's pointless something being beautifully conceived if it lacks relevance for the the people who are receiving it

Clients are simple, too, and they know what they want when a creative gets in touch to fish for work. "Creativity, communication, and the ability to deliver," says Cambridge-based print and Internet designer Nick Welsh (*www.monoindustries.com*). They're also thinking, "Can I work with this person?"

Clifford Boobyer agrees: "They're looking for a window into your business personality. They want to know what it's going to be like working with you. A client sees appointing an agency as potentially the most fun part of their procurement remit."

Brand consultant Martin Roach believes all clients look for something that stands out from the crowd. "The way people buy design these days, they haven't got the infrastructure to be evaluating 10 or 15 design agencies, just as I haven't the time to look at a dozen printers for a job. You've got to think about what it is that is going to keep you in the mix."

Ultimately, promoting yourself is like any design brief. "As a design company you've got to think intelligently about how you're going to speak to an audience," says Roach. "It's better to target five companies really well than 500 with a postcard that just replicates what any other design company might do. Just offering a service the whole time won't work."

Blackmagicdesign

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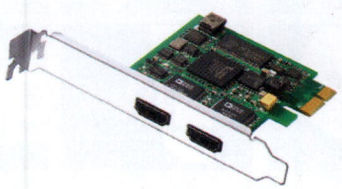

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Alpha mail

A well-researched and executed mail shot is one of the most potent self-promotional tools at the designers' disposal.

Becca Saraga, head of client services with video and broadcast agency Addiction, says you've got to send something innovative, or it'll end up in the bin. "We do quarterly showreel mailouts because all the stuff we do is moving image work, so it's best that they get to see it.

"Knowing the right person to send them to is important. With some of the markets we work in there's a very specific list of people who will always be the ones who commission the work, but with other markets this might require a lot of research."

Personalizing mail outs is vital, agrees Springett's Brendan Thorpe. "We'd never send out a 'Dear Brand Manager' letter, because this screams junk mail, and however much you've put into making the letter pertinent it will fail miserably."

Saraga reveals that although Addiction sends only one showreel across all the markets per mail shot, it also sends an accompanying letter that is tailored to each individual prospect - telling them why the showreel is relevant to that particular business.

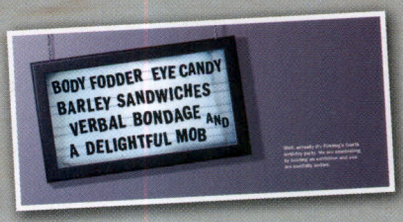
Being relevant is a must, says Springett's Thorpe. "You decide on the market that you want to move into and do your research. You need a letter that addresses something in their market or, for us as a branding agency, their brands. We may come across an interesting new appointment in the press and decide it would be worth sending something to that person.

"But we never send just a letter - we always back it up with one of our company brochures or case studies that we think are relevant to the prospect."

Following up mail shots is the key to winning new business, says Saraga. "Sometimes it's a case of 'We'll call you if anything comes up', but other times you get invited to pitch for work."

London agency Firedog eschews formal mailouts and takes a rather more maverick approach to promotional mail. Creative director Clifford Boobyer says it's all about achieving "lasting brand contact". The idea is that you send something that will stick around in the client's office for a while, although he admits that the (fake) poo in a box was a slightly risky strategy.

"We believe we can afford to take the piss in this regard," he says, "as it lasts as a brand touchpoint and is memorable. Businesses expect agencies to be full of shit, so I guess this just works on that principle."



Hi Chris
Firedog knows how to leave a mark. In fact, we have a real instinct for it.
If you're ever in need of effective communication, don't hesitate to call us.
The Firedog team

above: Firedog's mailouts tend to be a bit on the wacky side. From chilli sauce followed a few days later with toilet roll to cheeky copywriting. The company has even sent out a shiny fake poo in a box. "The overall message was: 'we are on your doorstep," says creative director Clifford Boobyer.

above: "An intelligent bit of direct mail is my favoured means of communication," says Epitype brand consultant Martin Roach. This printed version of the company's Web intro has led to all kinds of leads, and has resulted in new business, says Roach.

Clients want to know what it's going to be like to work with you

Clients know best... so we asked one

When creating marketing material, designers can at best make a well-informed guess about what will work and what won't. But what about those on the receiving end of all this stuff - the prospects and clients? What do they believe works, and why?

Kevin Hyde is European packaging development manager for Coca-Cola, and his 11 years in the role affords him a great overview of design pitches and sells.

"We come across a lot of design agencies as we work on new packaging development projects. This is mainly structural, but also involves graphics and brand identity," he says.

So what approach works best? "If it's a mailshot, then unless it's bang on the nail for the type of project we're working on at the time it will tend to get passed over," says Hyde. "I do get flyers from agencies but they usually end up in the bin. It's a fine balance between being hassled and being informed. I always encourage agencies to keep us up to speed with what they are doing, but in a format that doesn't take too much time or effort to understand.

"I think an email with an easy-to-read attachment is enough to catch interest. File sizes must be low and it must be pretty graphic in terms of content. They should also make a follow-up call to check that the email has been read. If I was impressed with the email then I will respond well to a call."

He adds that unless you can show you've looked into his company's needs, he won't have much time for you.

"Creative agencies should be able to show that they've done a bit of proactive work on how they think they can help us - generically, rather than on any specific project.

"What does not work is the cold call approach, with no thought about what the potential client's needs are. To differentiate yourself from the others you need to focus on the customer, not yourself. Selling yourself as an agency with an approach that's been trademarked, and presenting some generic examples of work, just won't cut it."

"We make it work"

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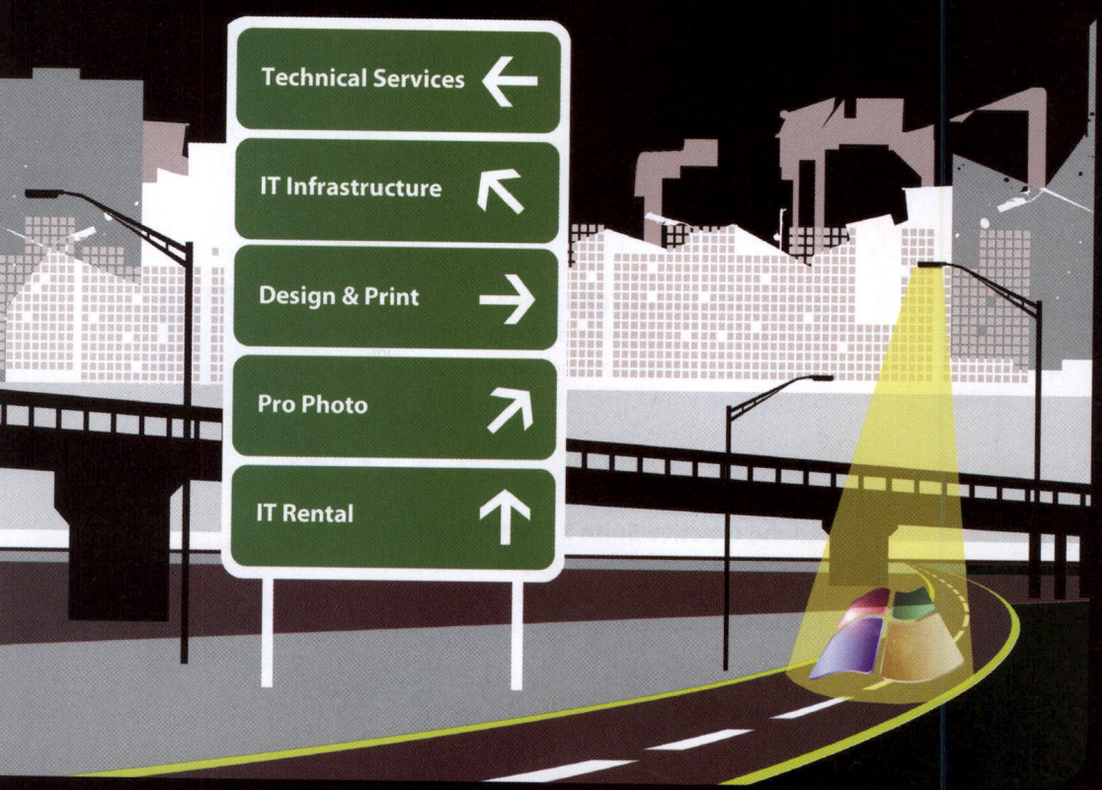

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Schmooze cruise

Meeting with people face to face is easily the best way to promote yourself - provided you don't blush, stutter, and get really, really drunk. Forging a relationship in person is the surest way to convert prospects into clients.

Self-promotional tools such as mailshots are designed to culminate in meetings, but the process can be hot-wired, by paying to attend design-networking events such as breakfast clubs, where potential clients and agencies meet and talk business.

When he was establishing his brand consultancy Epitype, Martin Roach relied heavily on networking events to drum up business.

"I did a hell of a lot of networking when I was setting out, mostly the breakfast clubs. One of the difficult things about design is being able to educate people about what it is you do, and I found the most useful thing about networking was I was able to succinctly explain what I do without people falling asleep, because they were there to be educated.

"For us these events were good for getting work in the start-up market, and also the below-20 employee market, which is the more fun stuff to get involved with. It's important to have a nice spread of clients, from small to large, in order to be able to flex your creative muscles."

One-man band Nick Welsh (***www.monoindustries.com***) has no doubt about the effectiveness of networking. "In my opinion, networking is easily the best way to get new business. There's nothing quite like getting out there and actually meeting people. I really enjoy meeting new people and finding out what they do and perhaps how I might be able to help them. Most of my work comes from networking with small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs), which in my experience tend to buy from other SMEs, not from ads or direct mail campaigns. The best form of advertising really is word of mouth."

But rolling up at a networking event and expecting work to fall into your lap will not produce results, warns Brendan Thorpe of Springetts Design. "You've got to make sure you know who's there and that what you talk about is what people want to hear," he says.

For Becca Saraga of video and broadcast agency Addiction, social networking is also important.

"We go to TV promo and channel branding events, not so much to sell ourselves but because we're part of that community. It gives you face time with people who can potentially commission us work but it's also a social thing. You get to know people on a social level that you've worked with, and that helps to strengthen your relationship."

Thorpe stresses that designers must never forget that any meeting with a client, however informal, is a form of networking. "Anytime you go to a client meeting it's a form of networking, because those people move on, and if you've got a good relationship they'll carry that on at their new company."

Card sharks

The humble postcard promotes everything from club-nights to condoms, and they provide a perfect canvas for creative pros to hawk their wares. Art and marketing directors' get sent sack loads of them - so you need to make sure yours ends up Blu-tacked to the wall rather than ditched in the recycling.

To work, a postcard must serve a specific purpose, says brand consultant Martin Roach. "We've done only one postcard, the purpose of which was to direct people to our Web site. If you're sending a card I think it needs to direct people somewhere or have some definite call to action, such as an event."

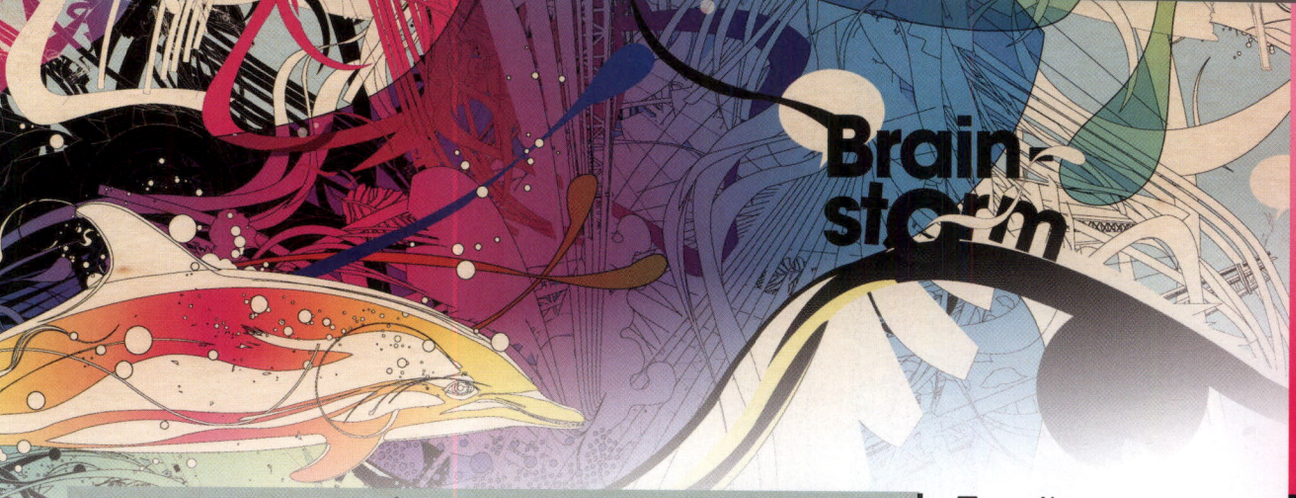
Nick Welsh uses cards as an extension of his stationary. "I really like postcards, and use them as compliment slips when sending out estimates, letters, and invoices. They also make a nice alternative to business cards."

For illustrator Adrian Johnson (***www.adrianjohnson.org.uk***), cards are an important means of promotion. "They're the oldest and still the best way of promoting your work as an illustrator quickly and economically, and everyone likes to receive something in the post that isn't a bill.

"The more personalized the card, the better. I've found that limited edition screen prints go down very well, and clients put them up on the wall or keep them on their desk. That's a great reminder to them that you do cool stuff."

left, below: Swedish image manipulator Patrik Blomqvist (**www.patrikland.se**) *created these postcards and sent them to clients for last Christmas. He says they ended up on many client's fridges, and got good exposure in December.*

Any client meeting, however informal, is a form of networking



"Ping me an email..."

At its best, email is an extremely cheap and immediate way to reach your prospects. At its worst, it's a blunt tool that's as likely to irritate potential clients as impress them.

For many, email does have a valued place in the marketing mix. Carbon Creative's Martin Hadfield says: "Personalized marketing email has been beneficial for us. We broadcast only to clients and recipients who have opted to join our mailing, usually via our Web site. Email broadcasts are a great way to keep clients up to date with news items and or new services that you are offering."

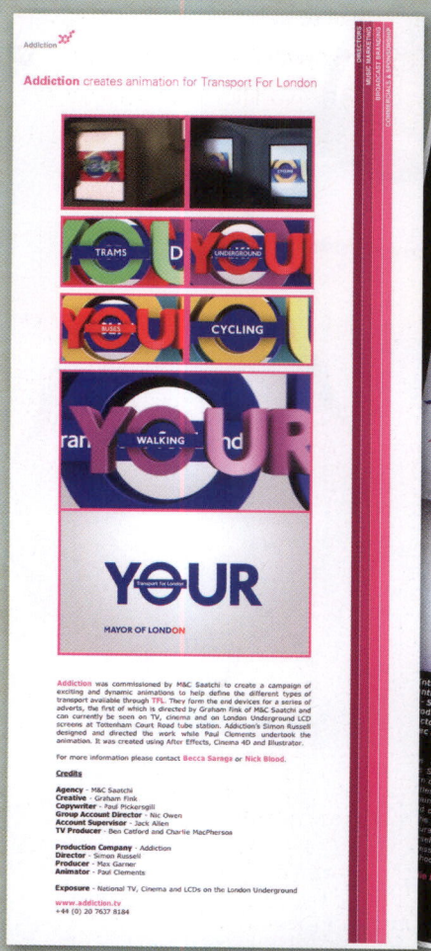
Martin Roach, founder of brand consultancy Epitype, also believes email can be valuable as a means of keeping clients in the picture. "The key to self-promotion is telling people what you're doing, and email has a part to play in this. We sent an email out recently to 100 clients to let them know a few of our logos were being included in a new book on the subject. They were genuinely pleased to hear about this, not least those companies whose logos were chosen."

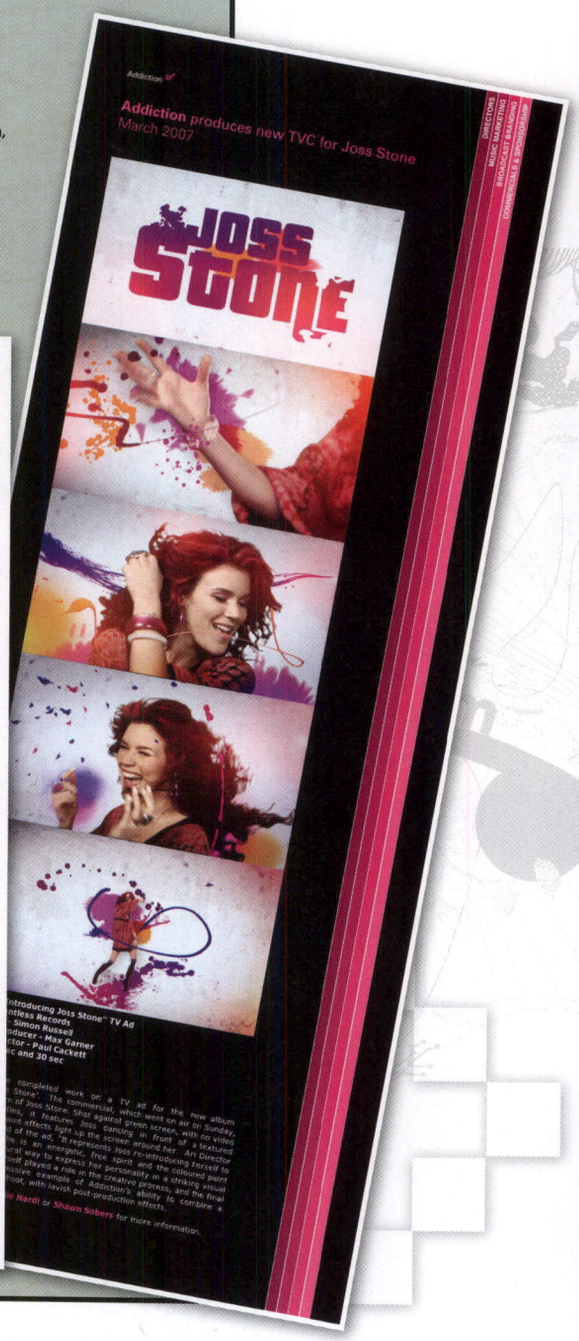
But of all the marketing tools, email must be handled with caution. "We think it's important not to bombard our clients so we tend to broadcast them every quarter," reveals Hadfield. "Creating them with a seasonal flavour fits our visual identity, and to add a fun element we run competitions that entice the audience to browse our Web site.

"In our last email broadcast we ran a 'Going Bonkers over Conkers' competition, in which we hid a conker on the site, and three winners were given an iPod Nano. Our clients loved it, and it drove a lot of traffic to the Web site."

But many have reservations over email, including Brendan Thorpe, sales and marketing director with brand consultancy Springetts Design. "We don't send emails. The trouble is, you have no idea how something will look when it's printed out at the other end, and a lot of our case study stuff involves big files that are not appropriate for email. Also, emails haven't got the same visual appeal as a well-crafted letter or case study."

Email broadcasts are a great way to keep clients up to date


Addiction
Addiction creates animation for Transport For London
TRAMS
UNDERGROUND
CYCLING
WALKING
YOUR
MAYOR OF LONDON
Addiction was commissioned by M&C Saatchi to create a campaign of exciting and dynamic animations to help define the different types of transport available through TFL. They form the end devices for a series of adverts, the first of which is directed by Graham Fink of M&C Saatchi and can currently be seen on TV, cinema and on London Underground LCD screens at Tottenham Court Road tube station. Addiction's Simon Russell designed and directed the work while Paul Clements undertook the animation. It was created using After Effects, Cinema 4D and Illustrator.
For more information please contact Becca Saraga or Nick Blood.
Credits
Agency - M&C Saatchi
Creative - Graham Fink
Copywriter - Paul Pickersgill
Group Account Director - Nic Owen
Account Supervisor - Jack Allen
TV Producer - Ben Catford and Charlie MacPherson
Production Company - Addiction
Director - Simon Russell
Producer - Max Garner
Animator - Paul Clements
Exposure - National TV, Cinema and LCDs on the London Underground
www.addiction.tv
+44 (0) 20 7637 8184
DIRECTORS
MUSIC MARKETING
BROADCAST BRANDING
COMMERCIALS & PRODUCTION



right: Film and video agency Addiction uses email for promotional purposes. "We send out PR emails to our database to inform them of new work," says Becca Saraga, head of client services. The pictured email newsletters bring the work Addiction did for Transport For London and for a TV ad for Joss Stone's album Introducing Joss Stone.

Site for sore eyes

The Web site is a vital promotional tool - a cocktail of scene setting and portfolio that's often potential clients' first point of contact with a designer, illustrator or agency.

"It's absolutely the most important part of any design agency," insists Clifford Boobyer of Firedog. "This is your shop window, so make it sing. Don't block your doorway with Flash, and make sure all your design is backed by sound marketing logic and information.

"This is what your clients want to know about - not about your print finishes. We get so many leads from our site, and are always getting compliments about its ease of use.

"We also have a blog, which we feel gives us the ability to convey our point of differentiation and personality. Due to the commoditized nature of our industry, your tone of voice is key to clients warming to you."

For an illustrator, a Web site is arguably even more important. Without his, illustrator Adrian Johnson says he'd have virtually no work at all. "Over 90 per cent of my work comes in as a result of my Web site. For sheer convenience sake, it's the most effective way to promote my work."

Carbon Creative's Martin Hadfield says a well-presented Web site is crucial. "It's often the first point of contact with a new client," he says. "We know from our Web stats it's often used as a point of resource by our existing clients - whether this is to simply view contact information, obtain a quote using the online forms or increasingly to order bespoke printed items."

carbon
Carbon Creative are striving to become a carbon neutral company, working in partnership with local forestry commissions. We plant a tree for every new client

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Apple NAB Special Event Announcements

NEW THIS MONTH
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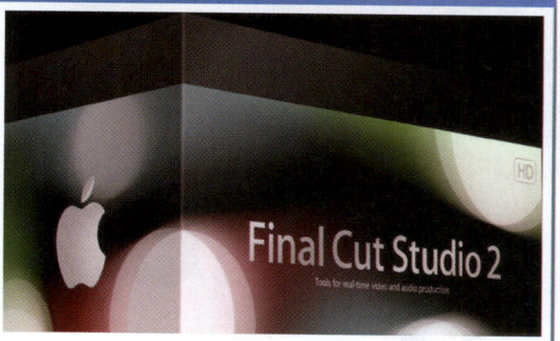
Final Cut Studio 2

Final Cut Studio 2 is the must-have upgrade to Apple's award-winning video and audio production suite. With six powerful applications, each designed specifically for editors, Final Cut Studio 2 puts everything you need in a single box:



- Final Cut Pro 6 for video and film editing
- Motion 3 for graphics and animation in 3D
- Soundtrack Pro 2 for professional audio post-production
- Color, a new application for professional color grading and finishing
- Compressor 3 and DVD Studio Pro 4 for digital delivery virtually anywhere — a disc, the web, Apple TV, iPod, or cell phone

Final Cut Studio 2 £699+VAT

Upgrade from Final cut studio £269+VAT

Final Cut Server

Final Cut Server is able to catalog over 100 file types, offers automatic proxy generation and keyword searching. The workflow automation consists of customizable workflow templates, a watch-and-respond system, review and approve procedures, tools and automated encode and publish.

Call for a technology overview

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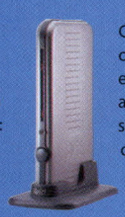

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Avid Mojo

Compact enough to take on location yet powerful enough to serve as the core of a professional video-editing suite, Avid Mojo hardware connects to both laptop and desktop systems with a single IEEE-1394 cable.

Multibridge Extreme

Multibridge Extreme and Multibridge Studio are the world's first all-in-one bi-directional converters which instantly switch between HD and SD, feature 4:2:2 and Dual Link 4:4:4 video quality, and include the new high speed PCI Express connection - Use it as the world's highest quality converter or an editing system.

Avid Express Pro HD £149+VAT - EDU

Avid Xpress Pro £949+VAT

Avid Media Composer Software £2995+VAT

Avid Mojo DNA £645+VAT - EDU

Avid Mojo DNA £949+VAT

Avid Mojo SDI £1499+VAT

Blackmagic Extreme PCIe £515+VAT

Blackmagic HD Studio £565+VAT

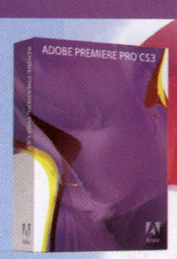
Blackmagic Multibridge Extreme PCIe £1399+VAT

Products of the month

Adobe

Adobe Premiere Pro CS3

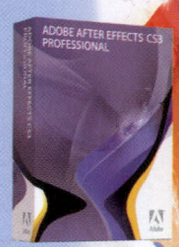
The start-to-finish solution for efficient video production that now includes Adobe Encore® CS3 and Adobe OnLocation™ CS3*, formerly the award-winning DV Rack™ HD. NOW ON MAC & WINDOWS



£529 +VAT

Adobe After Effects Pro CS3

Helps you bring your vision to life with blockbuster visual effects and compelling motion graphics for film, video, DVD, the web, and mobile devices.



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Aha! moments
How to have ideas

Creativity is all about exploring ideas. So how do you maximize your chance of having that elusive "aha!" moment? Digital Arts investigated...

words Matthew Bath **illustration** Jason Cook, *www.jasoncook.co.uk, www.flatliner-v2.com*

Creative ideas take a mere second to spark into life – yet the journey leading to that single, blink-of-an-eye event can seem a lifetime to a stressed-out, under-pressure designer.

But when that idea pops into life – and despite our complaints over creative blocks, it does – then we get the pay-off. The aha! moment is something to be treasured. It completes the puzzle, and allows our doodles, ideas, plans, and thinking to fall into place. Everyone's capable of having these inspired moments of inspiration – yes, even you – but sometimes our overworked brains feel as if they're misfiring, and that spells bad news for your project, and bad news for you.

Here, then, are ten ways to help grease the wheels of your right brain and bring your genius ideas out from your subconscious and into your latest project.

DON'T WORK NORMAL HOURS

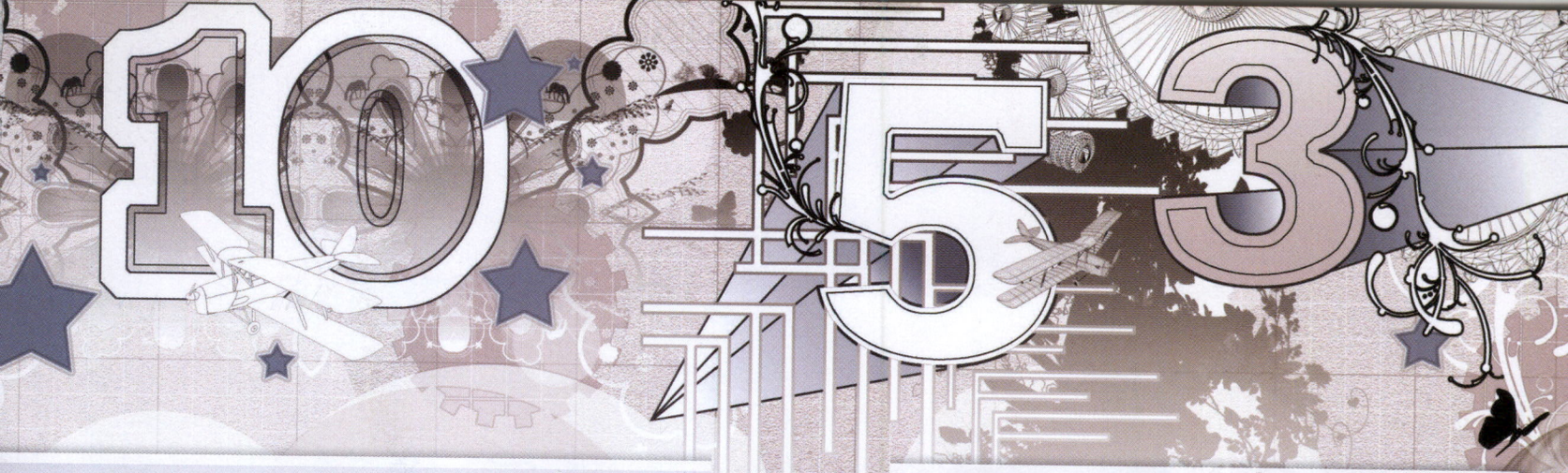
While business runs on a nine-to-five basis, the creative mind doesn't keep such structured hours, according to a bucket-load of studies. While most studies show that our creative peak is between 6am and 9am, other studies have indicated that creative powers peak between 9pm and 3am, particularly for the under 25s.

A recent Italian study revealed 'evening people' perform creative tasks better than their daytime counterparts – and is linked to the way your brain syncs with your body at different times of the day. One thing is for certain, most creative geniuses were out of step with the waking world: Van Gogh, Poe, and Newton are famous examples of night owls.

LAY FLAT

Can lying down make you more creative? Dr Lipnicki certainly thinks so, with published work in *Cognitive Brain Research* suggesting you can boost creativity by laying flat – something worth trying in the studio.

In Dr Lipnicki's study, volunteers were asked to solve anagrams ether lying down or standing up. Since anagram answers frequently arrive in a flash of insight – a sudden breakthrough or aha! moment – they are a good test of creativity. The average time to solve the anagram was significantly less while lying down, Dr Lipnicki found.



OPEN A DICTIONARY AT RANDOM

If you're stuck for that aha! moment, open a dictionary and randomly select a noun. Then, write down six attributes for that noun. For a house, then you might write roof, door, brick, slate, big, and solid. Take these back to the creative problem, and attempt to forge some links between the noun, associated words, and the problem in order to generate some new ideas. Alternately, select a word and try to formulate ideas that incorporate the word – this is based on the notion that freedom actually inhibits creativity – it's restrictions that get you thinking.

HAVE MORE SEX

A study of 425 British men and women published in The Proceedings of the Royal Society showed that creative types not only have more sexual partners, but tend to act on sexual impulses and opportunities more often. Sex is underpinned by the competitive drive to reproduce, and this competitiveness makes us take compulsive action. Our hormones take over, we become incredibly focused and can't think about anything but the object of our desire – and that can drive our creativity to see around obstacles and overcome barriers to our aha! moment. A new way to productively spend your downtime.

STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

This is like mind-mapping, but a little more freeform. Take a large sheet of paper, and write a big word in the middle of it, such as 'happiness' or 'travel'. Then, without pausing, judging, or clicking your tongue, simply scrawl, write, doodle, rant and create around the word. Write upside down, in circles – basically, there are no rules apart from what you write has to be associated with the central word. This stream of consciousness is brilliant at developing into an aha! moment. It's also amusing to read back in the pub.

TURN OFF THE TV

Don't watch TV. It's a totally passive experience that demands nothing more than sitting while our creativity ebbs away. TV offers nothing but distraction and bubblegum for the mind and is very different to reading, which forces us to use our imaginations.

EXERCISE YOUR BRAIN

Just like your body, your brain benefits from exercise. Stimulate it in a new way every day. You can listen to a different radio station, walk a different route to work, and keep your eyes and ears open to new sensations that will create exciting synaptic sparks.

ADOPT A GENIUS

One way to reach an aha! moment is to adopt a genius. Think along the lines of Einstein, Edison, van Gogh, Leonardo da Vinci, or Alan Fletcher. Adopt one of these clever people as a role model, and think about how this genius would tackle the problem you're facing. By learning about the lives and ideas of an interesting and intelligent historical figure, you can approach problems from a whole new perspective.

AVOID DRUGS

Western society has woven itself a tremendous myth when it comes to drugs and creativity. Quick to cite artists such as De Quincey, Coleridge, and Huxley, many creatives reckon their best work is aided by narcotics. Wrong. As Coleridge said in his poem about opium: "Fantastic Passions! Maddening Brawl! And shame and terror over all!" Even Oasis reckon the reason third album *Be Here Now* was so bad was that they'd "left it down the drug dealers". For most of us, drugs prevent true aha! moments.

LISTEN TO CLASSICAL MUSIC

The word music comes from the Greek 'muse', the goddesses of the arts and sciences. Because complex music is processed on both sides of the brain, listening to it primes your mind to be both artistic and scientific, intuitive and logical. Classics can coordinate right-brain imagery with left-brain analysis to help you solve problems more creatively, generate imagery to remove creative blocks, and expand your perceptual horizons. So, relegate The Klaxons from your iPod and load up some Bach instead.

This sequence, dubbed 'Oracle girl' used a series of cloth-based smoke visual effects and compositing in Fusion to achieve its mystical atmospherics.

Epic effects for *300*

Bringing Frank Miller's graphic novel *300* to life demanded epic visual effects – Screaming Death Monkey played a key role in building smoke and sky VFX.

words Matthew Bath

Based on the graphic novel by Frank Miller, *300* is a staggering, vicious story based on the epic Battle of Thermopylae, which saw 300 Spartans hold off the might of the Persian army. Miller's work has previously hit the cinematic screen in the form of the equally stylized *Sin City*. Directed by Zack Snyder (whose credits include *Dawn of the Dead*), *300* delivers a unique style using bluescreen backdrops and over 1,200 effects shots.

The film deploys a style that has been dubbed 'the crush'. The crush is based on Snyder's tactic of adjusting the colour balance of the film – a recipe that saw the black content crushed and the colour saturation boosted to transform the contrast-ratio of the film.

Screaming Death Monkey, headed by Jeremy Hunt, created a core of 100 shots for the movie, forming the basis of three of the film's key sequences. The headline sequence – dubbed 'Oracle girl' saw Hunt and the team transform an underwater-shot actor into an otherworldly, smoke-wrapped oracle infused with magic and mystery.

"I was first brought onto the project by the visual-effects supervisor Chris Watts, who I have known for a long time having worked with him on a number of projects," says Hunt. "We were given pretty detailed storyboards for the scenes he wanted us to bid on. My initial thoughts on the mattes and compositing was that it was going to be a challenge – especially the Oracle stuff – but it was so unique and just plain beautiful I was excited more than anything else."

Hunt has had previous brushes with fame. A few years back he co-directed the first Internet breakout viral short, *405* – which generated massive press coverage and industry plaudits (see Landing *405*). Hunt also has two Emmy nominations to his name for outstanding visual effects.

CREDITS

PROJECT
300

CLIENT
Warner Bros

STUDIO
Screaming Death Monkey
www.screamingdeathmonkey.com

SOFTWARE
NewTek LightWave
Eyeon Fusion
Adobe Photoshop

Creating and compositing the Oracle girl sequence was easily the most challenging part of the project, reckons Hunt, both technically and creatively, and demanded a pipeline that took in 3D, Photoshop, and effects compositing.

Dynamic smoke

"The smoke had to behave in very specific ways and do very specific things, but still look like smoke," says Hunt. "We went through a few R&D steps of particles, fluid dynamics and real filmed smoke before we decided on CG cloth simulations. My gut said that simple geometry with a few animation controls – such as morphing and bones – would give us the control we needed.

"I started playing with simple displacement and then handed it off to

The original plate shows the Oracle girl actor filmed in a large water tank against bluescreen.

Landing *405*

Before forming Screaming Death Monkey, Jeremy Hunt shot to fame in what has been widely hailed as the first Internet movie to gain mainstream attention. Edited using off-the-shelf software, it shows a jumbo jet landing on an American highway, and was filmed in 2001 on location over two days.

The three-minute short featured 62 shots, two-thirds of which had digitally elements – and 19 shots were entirely digitally created. The visual effects took around three months to create, including the creation of the DC-10 plane using NewTek LightWave 3D, and two on-road cars in the film. Other tools included Digital Fusion, Illusion, Adobe Premiere, and Photoshop. Premiere was used for the entire edit, while Photoshop was used to craft the maps for the 3D objects.

The hardware was run-of-the-mill: Pentium II and Pentium III workstations running Windows NT. View it at *www.405themovie.com*

It was going to be a challenge... but it was so unique and just plain beautiful I was really excited

another artist who worked out the cloth dynamics. That ended up giving us both the control and the feel of smoke that we needed. From there it was some clever compositing and layers of re-timed filmed smoke, and we got the look that the client was after."

For the Oracle girl scene, Hunt was given plates for her on blue, and one style frame that showed the look-&-feel of the lighting, sky, and smoke. Most of the shots of the actor were shot wet for dry – filmed in a large water tank on bluescreen to achieve an ethereal look. The shots were filmed at high speed, so Snyder could apply specific speed ramps that Hunt had to match.

"The next challenge was pulling her matte, and Wayne Shepherd composited all these shots and did a great job," says Hunt. "They were really tricky because the clothing she was wearing was very sheer and these shots had to match shots that were filmed on a dry set. Light behaves differently underwater, especially as it plays off the skin, so that was a bit tricky as he had to add specularity back to her skin."

As the underwater shot wasn't filmed on set, the next stage was to recreate the set in 3D and then light and position it to match the practical shots. Once done, the matte paintings for the sky were added, with the last element – smoke – layered on. The smoke was to prove the most challenging part of the sequence.

"The smoke was created using cloth dynamics in LightWave," says Hunt. "The strips of geometry were then morphed through a bone chain. The bone chain determined the location and animation of the smoke and the morph controlled how fast it was emitted from the lamps."

Once the geometry was rendered, it was loaded into Eyeon Fusion for effects compositing, with a subtle animation added using Fusion's Grid Warp tool to clean up and enhance the movement of the smoke.

Mattes were then created to place the smoke into the scene, layering it in front and behind the Oracle. Glows and colour correction were then added to make it appear as if it was being emitted from the hot coals, and then real smoke was added to the scene to add more depth and realism. Finally, everything was grained.

Sky is no limit

Hunt also generated fire effects for the scene, with all the fire elements based on real fire, with the 3D particle system in Fusion used to add sparks and embers.

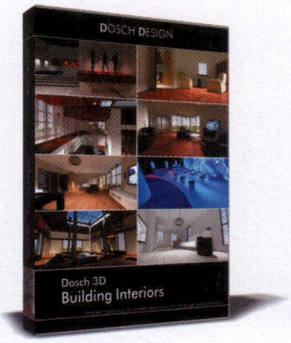
With the smoke finally clearing, Hunt turned his attention to sky replacement – something that was needed in every shot in some form. As everything in the movie was shot on bluescreen, Hunt had to track and add skies and environments, with the key creative challenge to achieve the look-&-feel of the skies.

"I believe that every single shot we did had skies that I created," says Hunt. "Some were just skies and a few had other elements like ground and horizon type stuff.

Prepare for glory

300 was released in the US on March 9, and is currently on general release in the UK. Trivia: footage from the film was shown at Comic-Con in July, 2006. Stunned by the clip, comic fans requested to view it three times.

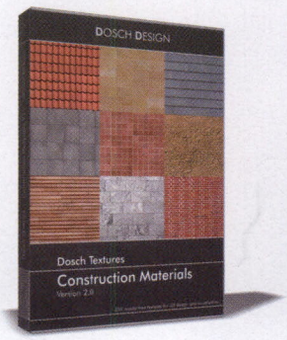
DOSCH DESIGN



Dosch 3D:
Building Interiors

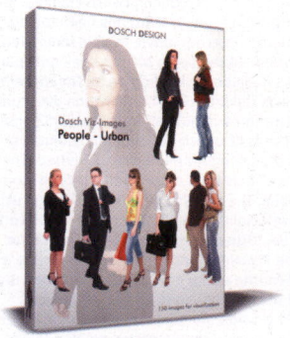
Dosch 3D: Buildings V2
for Maxwell Render

Dosch HDRI: Chrome
& Studio Effects V2



Dosch Textures:
Construction Materials V2

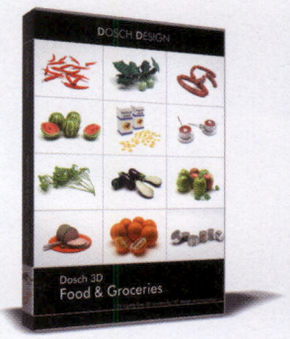
Dosch HDRI:
Radiant Skies



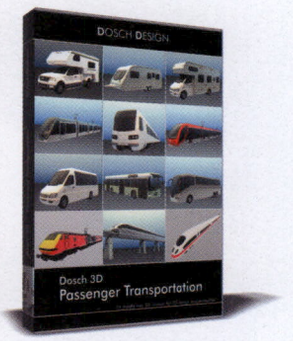
Dosch Viz-Images:
People - Urban

Dosch 3D:
Job Poses

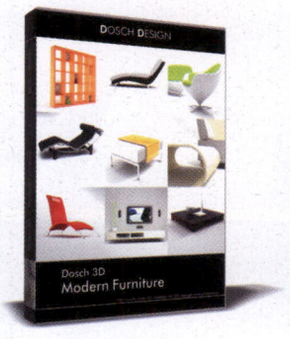
Dosch 3D:
Cranes



Dosch 3D:
Food & Groceries

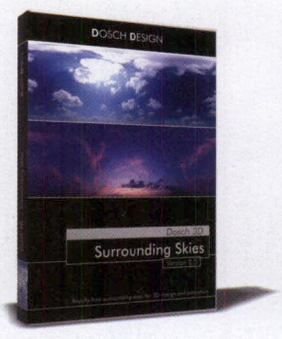


Dosch 3D: Passenger
Transportation



Dosch 3D:
Modern Furniture

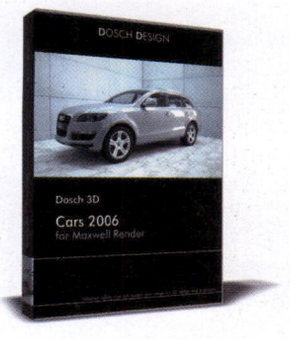
Dosch 3D:
Humans V2



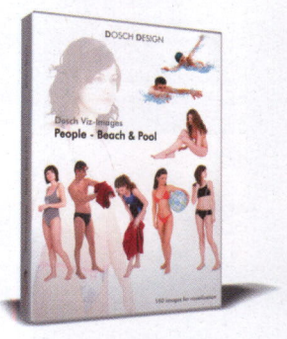
Dosch 3D:
Surrounding Skies V2

Dosch 3D:
Kitchen Designs

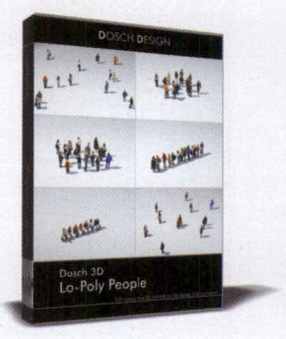
Dosch 3D:
Antique Furniture



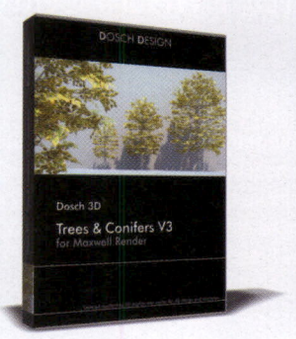
Dosch 3D: Cars 2006
for Maxwell Render



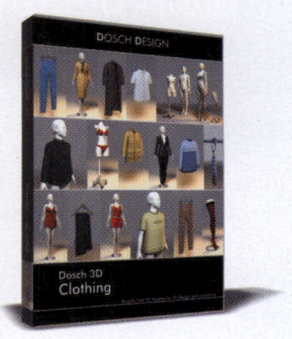
Dosch Viz-Images:
People - Beach & Pool



Dosch 3D:
Lo-Poly People



Dosch 3D: Trees & Conifers
V3 for Maxwell Render



Dosch 3D:
Clothing

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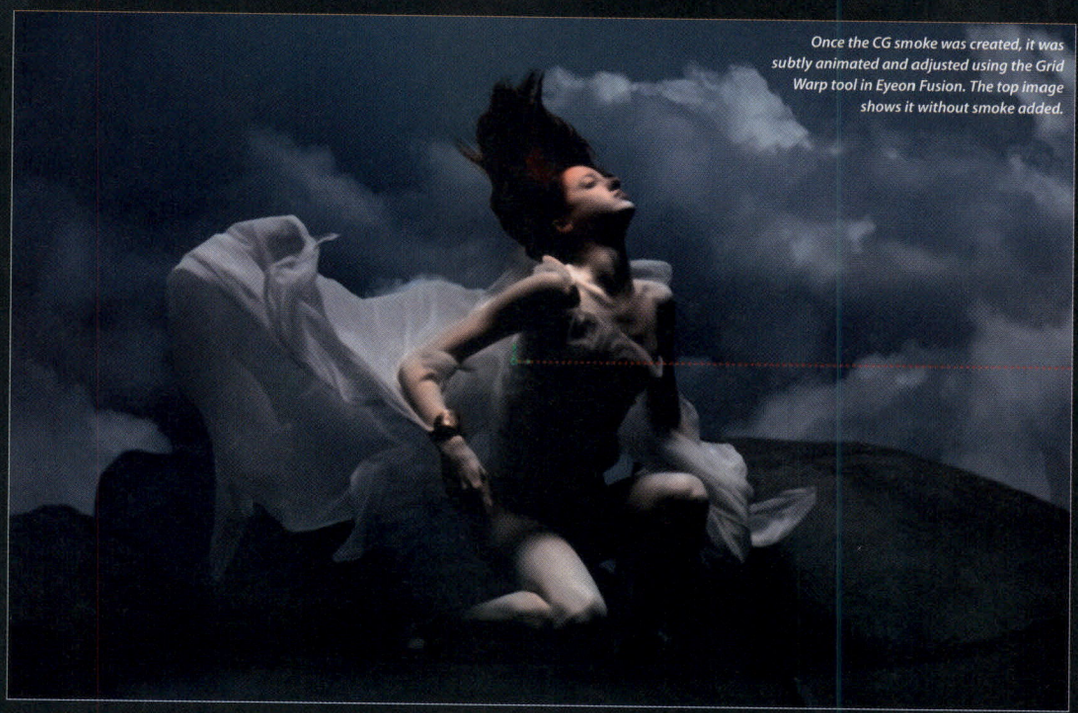
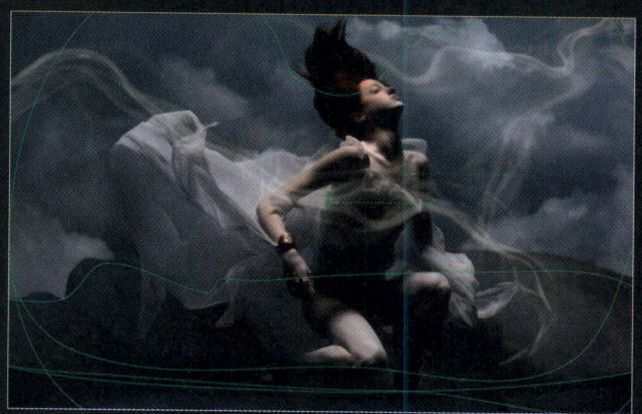


Once the CG smoke was created, it was subtly animated and adjusted using the Grid Warp tool in Eyeon Fusion. The top image shows it without smoke added.

"The first step was to put together a nice library of clouds. I was able to use a great set that a friend had taken while he was at sea on a worldwide cruise. From there it was a ton of Photoshop work. I would pull the clouds off the sky so I could animate them later. From there it was adding them back over gradients and other cloud elements using various blending modes. I also got out the water colour set and created a lot of textures that were scanned and brought in to add some graphical qualities."



Photoshop to Fusion

With the look settled on, Hunt then took the native Photoshop PSD files into Fusion for further work.

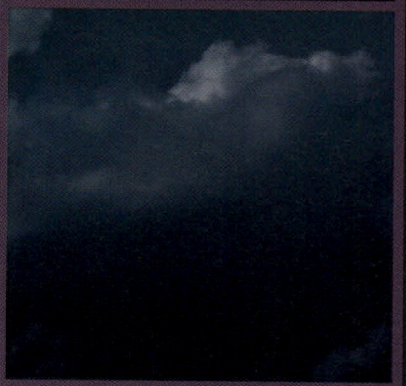
"Fusion is great because it can import a PSD and retain the layers with the blending pretty much intact," he says. "This is essential, because most of the layers needed to be animated to create the depth and movement of the clouds. For the animation of the clouds, the Grid Warp tool in Fusion was invaluable.

"Once the animation was done I would figure out roughly how many frames we needed for that particular angle and then render out a huge DPX image sequence for the compositor to add to the shot. Some shots required specific things that were also added. For instance, the big reveal shot of the Ephor's temple had a giant full moon. I created that moon in 3D and then used that as an element in the matte painting," he adds.

With the shots locked, Hunt turned to Wayne Shepherd, who owns At The Post, to handle all the bluescreen composites.

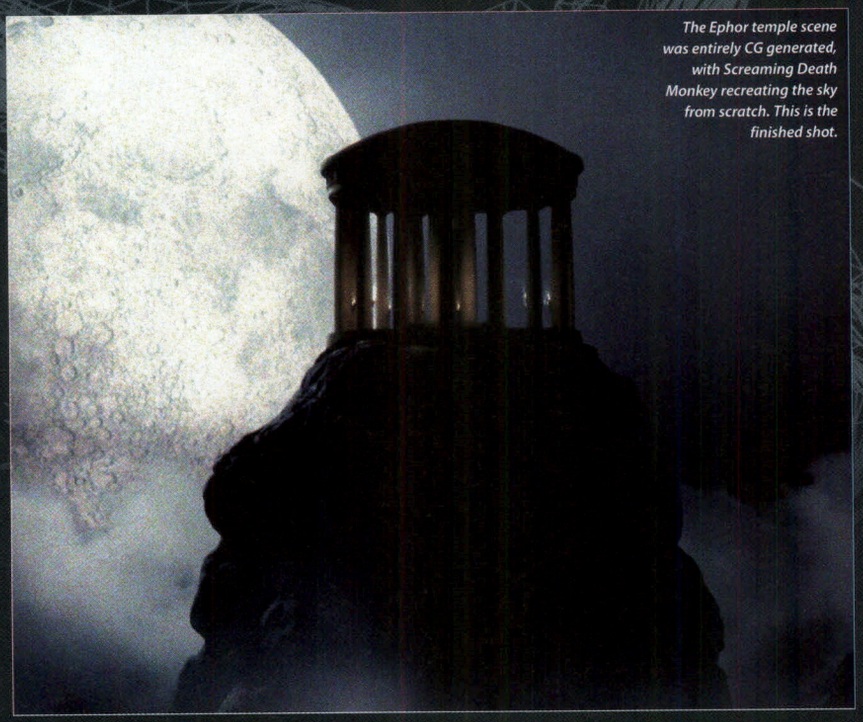
"Compositing can make or break a shot," says Hunt. "I've been friends and worked with Wayne for almost a decade now, so we have a very good working relationship and I can totally trust him to get composites that look great. He used Discreet Inferno to chew

I got out the water colour set and created a lot of textures that were scanned



Smoke without ire

The smoke itself was created using NewTek LightWave 3D, and is based on a cloth simulation following extensive R&D, says Hunt. The skies are all matte painted and animated.



The Ephor temple scene was entirely CG generated, with Screaming Death Monkey recreating the sky from scratch. This is the finished shot.

With the great art direction we were given, what could have been a nightmare was actually pretty straightforward

through the 100 or so shots we did. We used Fusion for the effects compositing because for my money it's the best desktop system out there right now, especially for film work."

With a generous timeframe, and a tight brief, Hunt says the project was great to work on – even though there was little leeway for creative interpretation.

"Zack seemed to know exactly what he was after and through Chris Watts and Grant Frekleton (the effects art director) was able to convey the look-&-feel very well. As far as our input, I would say that we had about as much input as a VFX vendor usually gets. We are given the ideas and then we have to interpret that and get it to a point that the vision of the director and VFX supervisor are realized."

Reaction has been universally good – with critics lauding the movie's effects and style. "The feedback was great," says Hunt. "I've known Chris and have worked with him over the past ten years, so we have good communication. His eye is impeccable and he's pretty specific on what he needs to happen to a shot to get it done. Couple that with the great art direction we were given, and what could have been a nightmare on a project like this was pretty straightforward."

With the film out on general release worldwide, Hunt and Screaming Death Monkey have a full roster through summer – and not all of it is client work.

"We're doing a handful of shots for another film and working on a commercial at the moment," he reveals. "As for what I'm most looking forward to, I would have to say it is creating our own content. We've been in the pre-planning stages on a couple of shorts that we want to start this summer, so when we get these going we'll let you know. They should be very cool." DigitalArts

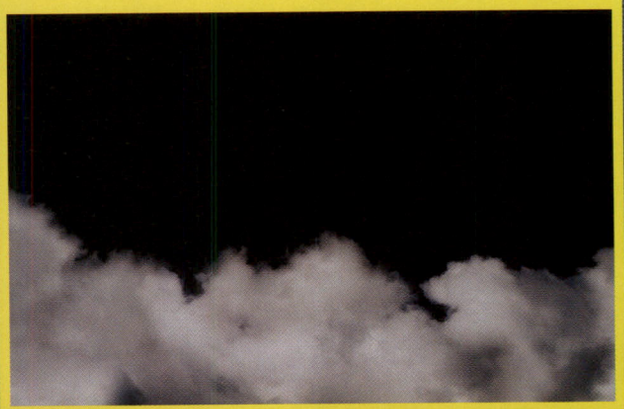
Moon on a stick

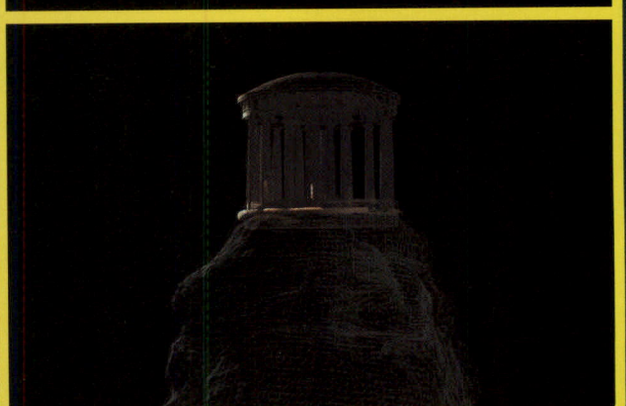
Jeremy Hunt of Screaming Death Monkey reckoned that every shot that the team built featured a digital matte sky created by him. In the sequence below, clouds were created, colour corrected and then animated.

Next, a CG moon was created in NewTek LightWave 3D, rendered as multiple passes and colour corrected. Foreground cloud elements were used to dirty up the moonscape.

The moon-heavy sky was then added to a 3D model of the temple (shown bottom), which included a CG mountain peak and foreground peaks, then combined and matted to simulate being lit by the moon.

This was then output to create the final shot as seen on the left.





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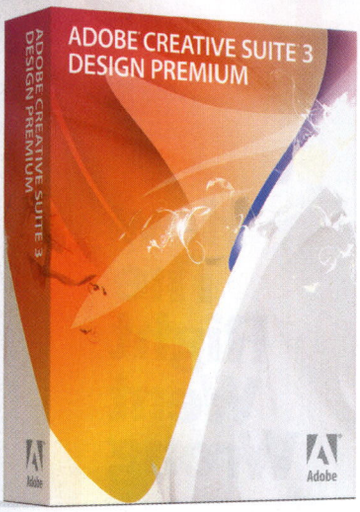

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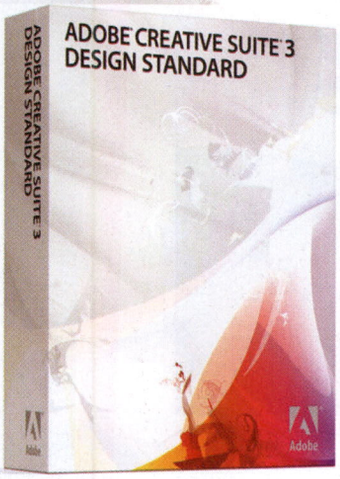

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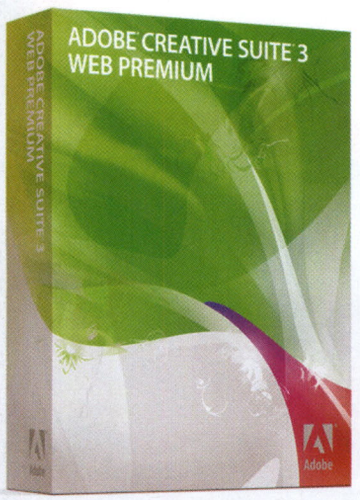

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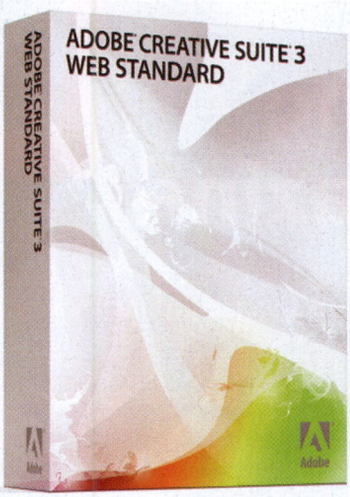

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Dashboard WASHINGTON MEMO ... NEWSREEL ... LOVE THE U.S., HATE THE U.S. ... A SAFER RIDE IN IRAQ ... MORTGAGE MELTDOWN ... LEXICON Verbatim "I SHOULD HAVE FOCUSED ... LESS ON MY PERSONAL MORAL VIEWS" People THE SCORE ... DIDDY AND SNOOP: HAS HIP-HOP HEALED? Milestones BYE-BYE, BETTY ... CAPTAIN AMERICA SALUTED ... LAST WORD: BRONX FIRE FUNERAL

2007 | #13

Briefing

THE MOMENT

The Confession Procession.
These are days of absolution in the nation's capital

"MISTAKES WERE MADE," Attorney General Alberto Gonzales admitted when pressed about the purge of eight U.S. Attorneys viewed as unfriendly to the Administration. "Mistakes were made," President Bush agreed the next day. It's a bad sign when officials are left quoting Nixon spokesman Ron Ziegler, whose handling of Watergate set the standard for nonconfessions as well as nondenials. Flamboyant apology has never been in the Bush script. This is an Administration known for firing people for independence, not incompetence. But campaign season has arrived, subpoena power has changed hands, and suddenly everyone is in a purgative mood.

This was Gonzales' second round in as many weeks, having joined FBI chief Robert Mueller in admitting how far the FBI had stretched the Patriot Act in order to probe the phone and bank records of 53,000 people suspected of terrorism. Setting the pace in the accountability race was Defense Secretary Bob Gates, who fired the Army Secretary for not firing those responsible for the Walter Reed scandal.

In private life the conscience is our secret police, driving us to repent, but in public life contrition is often more about opportunity than obedience. With epic misconduct on every front page—the Vice President's man a

In public life, contrition is more about opportunity than obedience

convicted perjurer, the sacred trust of wounded soldiers betrayed—there was a window for anyone accused of more commonplace crimes to wipe the slate clean.

Newt Gingrich confesses his serial marital sins to Focus on the Family founder James Dobson and wins absolution; Mitt Romney admits the error of his earlier tolerance of abortion rights. John Edwards seldom misses a chance to repent of his vote for the war, to highlight Hillary Clinton's refusal to do likewise. As for paying for past mistakes, Barack Obama took care of $400 worth of parking tickets left over from his law-school days—two weeks before he announced his candidacy.

Talk is cheap when confession plays as entertainment on daytime TV. In politics, as in church, there's no telling when penitence is sincere, for God alone knows the human heart. But it's a useful test in judging character to ask whether admitting failure comes at a cost—or a discount.—BY NANCY GIBBS

TIME March 26, 2007 15

right: ***The redesigned*** **Time** ***cover.***

MARCH 26, 2007
Casualties of an Outsourced War
A TIME Investigation
Four Critical Mistakes Your Doctor Makes
Why Will Ferrell Can't Keep His Clothes On
Hint: It's not his six-pack
TIME
How The Right Went Wrong
What would Ronnie do? And why the Republican candidates need to reclaim the Reagan legacy
BY KAREN TUMULTY
www.time.com

Reinventing *TIME* magazine

TIME magazine has undergone its first major redesign in 13 years. Digital Arts spoke to the creative team charged with its reinvention.

words Matthew Bath

TIME magazine is, perhaps, the world's leading international news magazine. Published weekly, it combines hard-hitting news and analysis with award-winning design, as well as business, science, and society features. Recognized as a barometer of world events, the people-driven magazine, along with its famed *TIME* Person of the Year, was launched in 1923 as the first weekly news magazine in the US. It's a magazine with a rich heritage, and one that for any redesign to succeed, needed to undergo carefully orchestrated change.

"*TIME* hadn't undergone a major redesign in more than 13 years, so for quite a while we felt like we needed to update and modernize the format," says *TIME* art director Arthur Hochstein. "The magazine had drifted away from a discipline and coherence that mark a successful design. This feeling was heightened when Rick Stengel took over as managing editor. Rick wanted to make significant structural changes that would reflect his editorial vision."

Stengel had several priorities, says Hochstein. The first was the need for *TIME* to convey both clarity and ease of navigation – attributes, says Hochstein, that underscore the positioning of *TIME* as a place where readers can go to unpick the week's key information and news.

Quality *TIME*

"He also wanted it to be beautiful to look at," says Hochstein. "*TIME* isn't trying to mimic the Internet with speedy-looking graphics or with bite-sized information nuggets. Rather, it is trying to be a companion to a reader's other sources of information. It is something to read, and something to look at."

Outside consultation was also called for,

REINVENTING HILLARY • YAHOO!'S NEW STRATEGY • BILL GATES SPEAKS
TIME
BACK TO REALITY
Why Iraq and Iran are forcing Condoleezza Rice to rethink U.S. foreign policy and deal with the world as it is

above: The Time *cover, pre-redesign.*

The *TIME* cover

"We wanted the cover to signal a change, but we were unwilling to give up one of the greatest branding elements in magazines, *TIME*'s red border," reveals art director Arthur Hochstein.

"The logo, as well, was considered inviolable, although, as you can see, we made it smaller to accommodate a row of 'refer' boxes above the logo, that we have dubbed 'the ribbon'. These were added to more strongly promote inside stories on the newsstand, but we decided that the subscriber could use them as well.

"So, with those parameters in mind, Luke [Hayman of Pentagram] and I arrived at a pretty conservative solution that reduced the existing logo by 80 per cent and added a flexible row of boxes that usually – but not always – contain two photos. The first box has larger type, and is the most important item. Any of the boxes could be all Franklin Gothic, or use a combination of Franklin and Proforma, depending on the fitting needs and the rhythm of the writing. The boxes use a three-part colour scheme: black with white type, grey with black type, and a third colour that is compatible with the other elements of the cover."

CHECKOUT
Top 10 Best Sellers of 2027
We look ahead at the books that will top the charts 20 years from now
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wednesdays with Rummy
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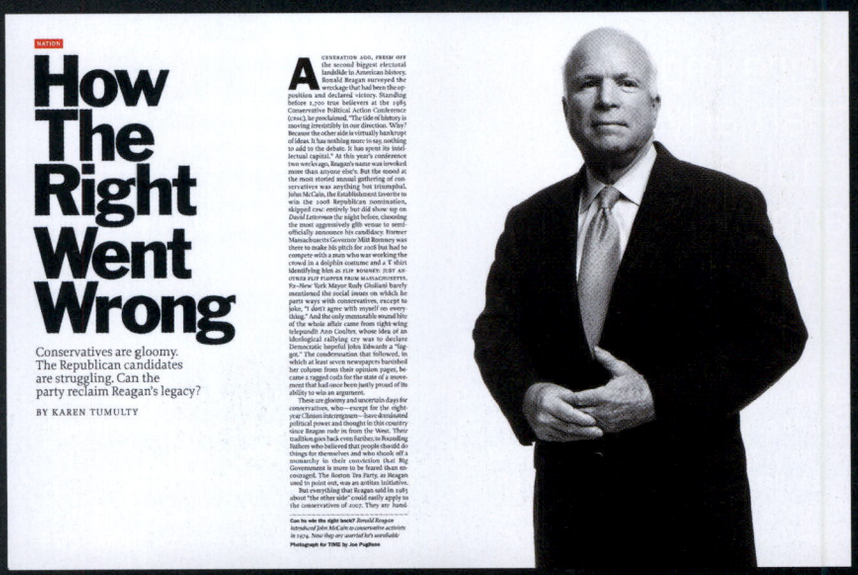
THE NEW AXIS OF EVIL
Occupying Middle Eastern Countries
DUMMIES
MOMMY, WHAT WERE POLAR BEARS?
If I Did It Once Again
O.J. Simpson
The Best Water Parks & Shopping Centers Of the Amazon Rain Forest
The Smartest Guy in Cell Block Three

left: Simplicity was key to the Time *redesign, as the team felt it had moved away from coherence and clarity since its last revamp.*


NATION
How The Right Went Wrong
Conservatives are gloomy. The Republican candidates are struggling. Can the party reclaim Reagan's legacy?
BY KAREN TUMULTY

CREDITS

PROJECT
TIME redesign

CLIENT
Time, Inc

STUDIO
In-house team, plus Pentagram
www.pentagram.com

SOFTWARE
QuarkXPress
Adobe Photoshop
Adobe Illustrator
NewTek LightWave

TIME needed a structural shift in light of new challenges

with the *TIME* creative team inviting three or four designers and design teams to pitch for the project. The brief was simple: what would you do if you were reinventing the news magazine yourself? The move to pull in outside help was vital to the project's success, reckons Hochstein. The team felt their own assumptions and viewpoints needed challenging by people who weren't invested into the status quo. *TIME* needed to undergo a structural shift in light of the new challenges it faced. Following a month-long pitching process, *TIME* opted to run with Pentagram as its redesign partner.

The first challenge the two teams faced was the fine balance needed between respecting *TIME*'s unique and rich heritage, and ushering in a more modern treatment.

"We all assumed that we didn't want to create something so new and unfamiliar that we would run the risk of alienating our core readership," reveals Hochstein. "We also knew that Pentagram wouldn't try to push us into something we didn't want to do, and that they would give great consideration to our visual heritage. When [Pentagram's] Paula Scher and Luke Hayman began their typographic examinations, they looked at other faces, but rather quickly returned to Franklin Gothic as the primary display face. Franklin was used by Walter Bernard in his 1977 redesign. "We had Matthew Carter re-envision it as Benton Bold Condensed, which we used up until this redesign," says Hochstein. "Pentagram felt that Franklin both signified news and reinforced our brand and heritage. They also felt it could be used in a fresh and modern way."

News nuggets

With the team embedded – Luke Hayman set up an office within *TIME*, and *TIME* deputy art director Cynthia Hoffman worked with the redesign team full time so as to ease production and editorial integration. Headline changes involved examining the pace, type, cover, and the use of image and colour.

"Creating shorter nuggets of information wasn't really part of the overall programme – in certain parts of the magazine it was just an outgrowth of a specific editorial need," says Hochstein. "The pacing structure was basically a short, long, short rhythm.

right: With readers turning to the Internet for up-to-date information, the TIME *redesign focused on making the magazine a companion to news consumption.*

WORLD
Iran's War Within
Why signs of turmoil among Iran's leaders may be the U.S.'s best hope for avoiding a showdown with Tehran
BY SCOTT MACLEOD
'The volume of criticism emanating out is unprecedented in the last century of Iranian politics.'
—MOHAMMED ATRIANFAR, OF ADVISER TO FORMER PRESIDENT KHATAMI
The agitator President Ahmadinejad claims in Tehran last October. He has seen his powers curtailed by Iran's establishment
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Commentary
Republicans.
Christian,
Arts
THE BIG PICTURE BOOKS DOWNTIME
The new baddie in the decency wars
Culture Complex page 74
He's got some hide The comedian says of his methodology, "Preparing for a character? Uh, no."
MOVIES
Captain Underpants on Ice. How Will Ferrell made a career out of improvised stupidity, humiliation and bare skin
BY JOSH TYRANGIEL/LOS ANGELES
IF YOU'VE SEEN ONE WILL FERRELL MOVIE, you can probably see his latest, Blades of Glory, in your head right now. Ferrell plays Chazz Michael Michaels, a sex-addicted alcoholic ex-figure-skating champ who bottoms out when he vomits inside a foam mascot head while on the ice during a children's skating revue and is redeemed when he becomes part of history's first male-male pairs skating team. "The part was written for a young Martin Landau," says Ferrell. "It's a script that's been around for 30 years, just waiting for its time. That time is now."
The part was actually intended for Ben Stiller, but Stiller, who is a producer on Blades of Glory, which opens nationwide March 30, backed out because he felt the role was too similar to ones he had played before. Ferrell had no such qualms even though he has made lots of sports movies (Talladega Nights, Kicking & Screaming and Semi-Pro, a basketball comedy shooting in
Photograph for TIME by Michael Grecco
67

Handling images

"Image usage is an evolving feature. In general, we are trying to get as much modern photo portraiture in the magazine as we can," says art director Arthur Hochstein. "But photojournalism is a core strength of *TIME*, so we will always look for ways to present it in a strong way. We tend to use more non-bleed photos, preserving a white frame around the images. Conversely, we are using more silhouetted photos in the front of the book. We are trying to get away from the obligatory photo, one that simply repeats what is in the text. Instead, we are looking for photos that impart their own narrative on a story presentation.

"Regarding graphics, we are trending toward a more vector-drawn, modern sensibility. In the past, *TIME* developed a well-earned reputation for highly rendered, information-dense graphics. While we will still do rendered graphics, our default style will feature a lighter touch, with a more schematic approach, meaning less adjacent text with the graphics. It will take a while for us to find a balance point here, but that's part of the challenge," he adds.

More important than any type choice was its application in a crisp format

"The emphasis here is on content, rather than varied typography and visual pacing. So visually, the front and back are 'bookends' of more compressed information that surround a more airy, visually driven well."

For the body face, the team picked Proforma, due to Hayman being strongly committed to a text face that imparted a sense of modernity, combined with ease of reading.

"Proforma is a face without a lot of attitude," says Hochstein. "It's not derived from classical roman typefaces. It's more matter-of-fact. My own feeling is that it makes the magazine feel a little more objective, and a bit smarter than its predecessor. More important than any particular type choice, though, was its application in a crisp, disciplined format that de-emphasized type as illustration, that made type part of an overall framework for words and images."

Colour has also been greatly simplified – with a less-is-more approach from the team. The result is a core palette that uses 100 per cent magenta, 100 per cent red, and a 100 per cent yellow for bright accents, with very few other colours deployed.

"We abandoned tinted boxes and coloured type in headlines, which is a great relief," says Hochstein. "We had drifted much too far in the direction of decorative type, which is the wrong approach for a serious news magazine."

OS X factor

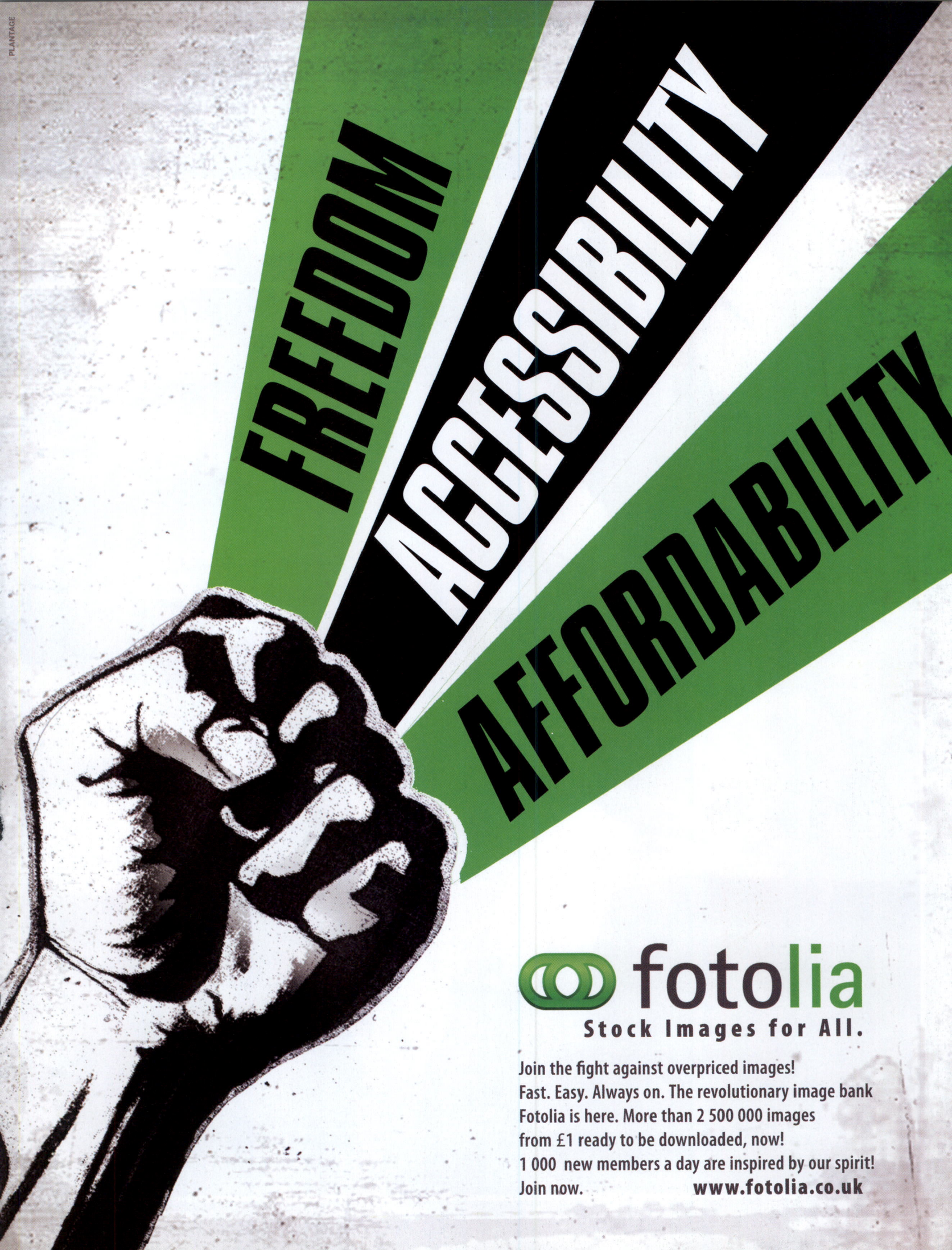
With the design evolving, the team developed templates as they progressed – making for a smoother transition from concept to execution.

"The most frustrating aspect is that we are still using QuarkXPress 4 on Mac OS 9. That will be corrected by the autumn of this year, when we will migrate to InDesign on OS X. That means we had to build the templates in QuarkXPress 4, knowing that they would have to be replaced in about six months. This created a lot of snags, but the Pentagram team adjusted, and we will be ahead of the game when we make the transition."

With the new-look issue now live, it's been gathering some initial positives, says Hochstein, not least from Samir Husni, a US professor of journalism who is authoritative enough on the industry to call himself "Mr Magazine".

And, if it's good enough for Mr Magazine, it's good enough for us.

PLANTAGE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WHO

NEIL DUERDEN
Neil Duerden is a self-confessed Mac monkey based in a rural miners cottage 20 miles north of Manchester. He creates pieces that combine elements from mixed media, photography, and that are interlaced with complex vectors for clients all around the world. His clients include Saatchi and Saatchi, *The Sunday Times*, Virgin, Fairy, Stella Artois, and Nike.

CONTACT
www.neilduerden.co.uk

SOFTWARE
Adobe Photoshop
Adobe Illustrator
Corel Painter

TIME TO COMPLETE
Two hours

ON THE CD

You can follow this tutorial yourself by using the image provided on this issue's Digital Arts CD.

Dynamic depth in Photoshop

Up-&-coming creative artist Neil Duerden has been wowing the design community with his effects-heavy work. Here's how he uses Photoshop's Multiply blend mode to add depth.

For this tutorial, we're going to be primarily using Adobe Photoshop to create an image that layers a stack of simple effects. The result is a more complex final image that shows considerable depth in its composition. This style of image is simpler than you'd think to create, but can demand a lot from your system. You will be switching between Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and Corel Painter as well, and throwing a few hand-rendered elements in just for good measure, and to bring out the hands-on creative in you.

The key here is a focus on experimentation, especially with blending modes such as Multiply, and Photoshop's layer effects

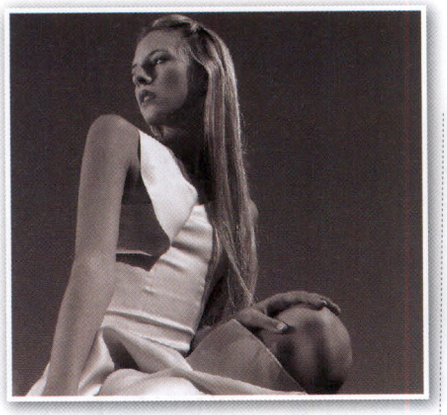
A central element of this tutorial is the use of the Multiply function in Photoshop. Part of the darken family of blending modes, at its most basic it compares the blend layer's pixels with the base layer on a channel-by-channel basis, but rather than simply choosing the darker of the two, it multiplies the base colour by the blend colour. A multiple of black will always be black, and anything multiplied by white is unchanged. Otherwise, the net result is always a darker underlying image.

Multiply can seem odd at first glance. The concept of mixing paints – red and blue, for example – is simple to grasp. Multiplying is similar to the leap between addition and multiplication in mathematics.

To understand it, here's a mini tutorial. Try creating a document that has two layers in Photoshop. Fill both layers with the same mid-range colour. A light grey works best here. Next, switch the top layer's blending mode to Multiply, and you'll see the mode in operation, with the blend colour a much darker grey.

The key for this tutorial, though, is to focus on experimentation, especially with blending modes such as Multiply and Photoshop's layer effects, and having a great starting image. While there is a lot you can follow directly along with – and the splat.ai file is included on the cover CD so you can do just that – an image such as this is heavy on creative fun.

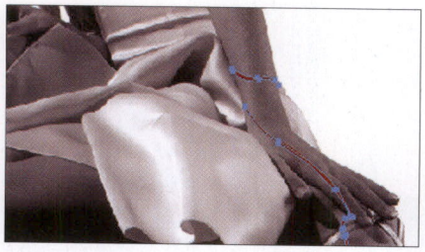
Part of creating a complex image such as this is to be a magpie when it comes to images. From the base mono image through to hand-drawn elements, cutouts and scanned elements, our image is alive with points of interest and texture.



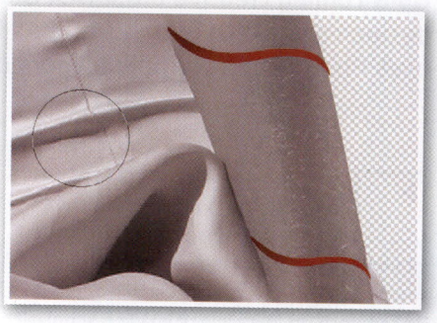
step 01 First, you need to obtain a mono shot that has good deal of contrast. The shot can have a background or be on an infinity screen, though bear in mind that each type will give a different feeling to the final piece. Your main task here is to find a shot you like, as you will be staring at it for some time.

step 02 Mask off the subject as tightly as possible, by creating a duplicate layer and adding a layer mask set to reveal all. Next, select the mask itself and draw around the image you wish to keep. You can use feather-edge brushes to allow for semi-transparent edges. Alternatively, you can use masking software like onOne Software's Mask Pro 4, which makes this bit a lot easier.

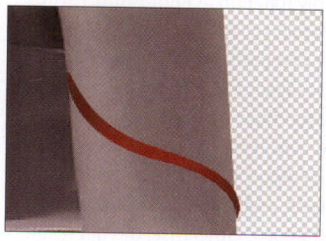
step 03 Now, add a layer in between your two existing layers and add a splash of colour. To do this, simply add a gradient of your chosen colour to create a little contrast and use the hue command in the layer effects. Don't make this too obvious, as the effect should be subtle.



step 04 Next, switch your image into Adobe Illustrator. With the image opened, begin to draw vector lines over the top. Remember to place it on a separate layer and lock it before you start, as accidentally moving the image as you draw your vectors is not good! Draw whatever you fancy, and in keeping with your chosen image as this is where you stamp your mark on the piece.



step 05 If you have kept the original the same size in Illustrator, all you need to do is paste it into Photoshop and it will be the correct size. If you're not happy with the colour, you can simply adjust the hue by going into the **Image>Adjustment>Hue and saturation** menu.



step 06 Now highlight vectors using the Burn tool – using this will give added depth. You should vary the brush size to get the best possible result. You want to make this appear as a cross between a real look and a plastic falseness to help it stand out from the original layer. This will obviously differ depending on what you used as a base image.

TIP

You can use Multiply in a number of ways. One is to mix in a Gaussian blur to the blend layer to create a smart soft-focus effect. This works because Multiply works on shadows and midtones. The result is a more moody, atmospheric image that sees dark tones bleed into areas with strong highlight. Experiment and see.

step 07 Duplicate up the top layer of the subject, and then adjust the hue and saturation as in step 5, using a colour that matches the composition of your piece. Next, add more sections to your layer mask to hide areas and give more interest to the viewer. Use your own personal judgement here, and don't shy away from experimentation.

step 08 Next, freehand draw a shadow beneath the model and using the layer effect Multiply. You need to place one below at 100 per cent opacity, and one above at around 50 per cent opacity to hide the joint between the model and the background.

step 09 Open up the file splats.ai supplied on this month's cover CD and paste these onto your image, and set the layer to Multiply. Place this layer behind the main masked subject layer and experiment with the layer opacity to get the effect level you think is right. Repeat this process several times, adjusting the opacity each time, until you get the complexity you desire.

Time for some hands-on creativity. Get out your pen and paper and do a few hand-rendered drawings. Scan these in and place them behind your subject image. The image layer then needs to be set to Multiply. If necessary, use the **Edit>Transfer>Perspective** feature in Photoshop to get your scanned in drawings to better match your composition.

Tme to swap programs. For this final stage, we're going to use Corel Painter. Open your layered file in Painter and duplicate the master layer of the girl, then apply the **Effects>Fill>Pattern** filter and choose the rose design. Then apply this to the layer top layer using the Gel layer effect, reducing the opacity to around 15 per cent.

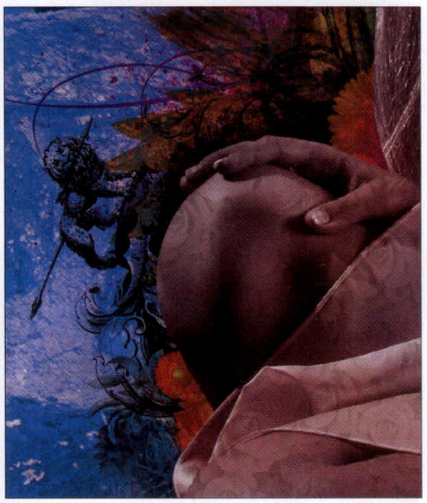
step 10 Now you need to get a picture of an item that complements your image, and clip it out and place the image behind the main image, adding a slight drop shadow – enough to boost the contrast. You then need to duplicate this layer, resize it, and change the opacity and layer modes in random to get a mixed effect. There is no science to this – just experiment.

step 11 Next, duplicate the splat effect and flower layers, changing the hue and saturation to fit in with the composition. This will give a more blended feel to the image as a whole. Next, multiply these layers down using various layer effects. I can't stress enough that this is all a chance to experiment!

This is all about making the image look different. Drawing vectors and importing them can be a good idea to add depth

TIP

You can use Multiply as a quick way to colourize images. Simply paint or scan your B&W outline image onto a layer in Photoshop, and set it to Multiply. Create a new layer underneath, and then paint directly onto that layer using your colour palette and brushes. The colours show through, and you don't run the risk of line damage.



step 12 Finally, introduce some other elements using the same effects as with the flowers in the earlier step. Don't be shy – just pile them up and work on your composition. You can take this as far as you want. Remember this is all about experimentation and making it different so try to get a good selection of items in at this stage. Drawing vectors and importing them can be a good idea to add more depth.

step 13 Continue experimenting in this way, adding layers and elements until you're happy. Then just flatten your image and save the file.

DigitalArts

Recreating *A Scanner Darkly*

Artist Aaron Sacco worked as an animator on the movie *A Scanner Darkly*. Here he shows you how to recreate the film's signature 'interpolated rotoscoping' effect in Illustrator.

WHO

AARON 'REN' SACCO
Austin-based Sacco is experienced in fine art, illustration, animation, murals and graphic design. He specializes in detailed representional art, such as portraiture, where likeness is important, and has a passion for abstract expressionist painting and drawing.

CONTACT
www.aaronsacco.com

SOFTWARE
Adobe Illustrator

TIME TO COMPLETE
Five hours

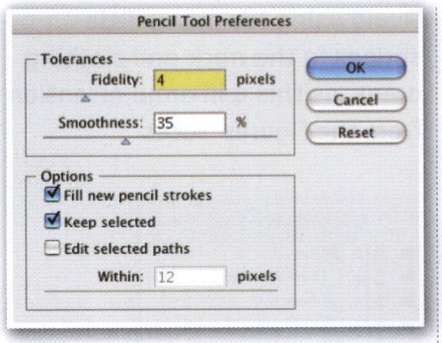
You can turn any photo into a dynamic illustration in the style of Richard Linklater's *A Scanner Darkly* using just a Wacom tablet and Adobe Illustrator. After working as an animator on the film, I developed the process outlined here for recreating this bold effect, using shapes of solid colour to represent a realistic image.

A Scanner Darkly, which stars Keanu Reeves and Winona Ryder, used an animation technique called interpolated rotoscoping. Similar to rotoscoping, where each frame of film is painstakingly hand-painted, interpolated rotoscoping uses vector keyframes and interpolates between keyframes automatically. Each minute of animation in the movie required over 500 hours of work.

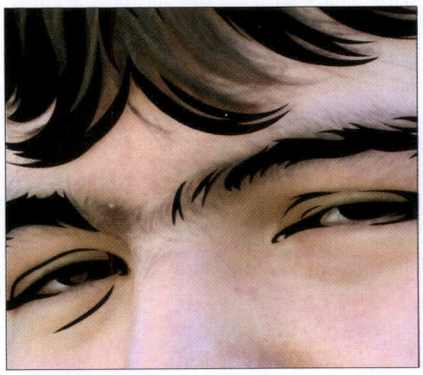
For this tutorial, we're not going to animate a sequence, but concentrate on one image, representing one frame. The focus of the tutorial is to recreate the incredible, unique style of the movie through the use of colour and vectors.

For an image of this complexity, you should expect to spend five to six hours illustrating it. If you limit your colours and detail, you can spend less – but it's worth putting in the extra effort. If you're learning and experimenting, you can expect to spend much more. Be bold and have fun!

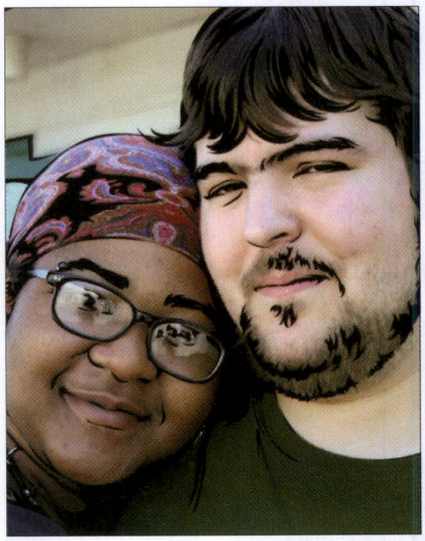
step 01 Choose a high-resolution image for photo reference. The larger the image, the more detail you will have to play with. Go to **File>Place** to insert it into your Illustrator file. In the Layers palette, double-click the layer with the image; I name this layer 'Reference'. Once you have locked that layer, you will be able to draw over the top without disturbing it. Click the Add New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. I call this new layer 'Inks' and it should remain on top throughout the process.



step 02 Press **N** or click the Pencil tool from the Tools palette and check that the Fill colour is Black and the Stroke colour is None. Adjust the Pencil tool's settings by double-clicking the Pencil tool and change the Fidelity to 4 pixels, Smoothness to 35 per cent, and check both 'Fill New Pencil Strokes' and 'Keep Selected' boxes. If you experience difficulty drawing a smooth shape, increase the Fidelity and Smoothness. If you're losing detail or control, decrease those settings.



step 03 To recreate the look of *A Scanner Darkly*, you must think of lines as long, thin, irregular shapes filled with black. Using the Pencil tool, you can manually produce a calligraphic line by automatically filling in the region between two arcs. Draw smooth decisive arcs to indicate where you imagine the points should be set. Too much wobbliness yields an uncontrolled shape with rough edges. To edit an ugly shape, use the pen tool to delete extra points and simplify the form. It will take practice to learn how to manipulate the pencil tool accurately, but be patient and you will develop an intuitive understanding of how to manipulate the shapes quickly. Deselect after each shape by pressing **Command-Shift-A** (Windows: **Control-Shift-A**).



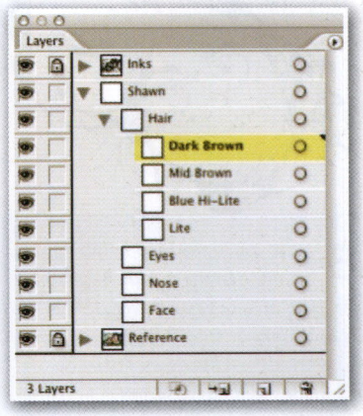
step 04 Check that you are on the 'Inks' layer and 'ink' the image, just like a graphic novel. Draw thin black shapes around the major forms. Also fill in the darkest regions with larger black shapes. If you need more control for areas such as the eyes or nose, you can switch to the Pen tool to draw exact curves and straight lines. This step requires the most nuance. Remember to always lock each layer when you're finished or not working on it to avoid confusing errors later on.

step 05 Toggle the Eye icon on your Layers palette to hide the Reference layer and check your progress as you go. If you accidentally release the line before you outline the shape you're tracing, you can draw another shape that completes the shape in the same colour. I prefer to press **Command-Z** (**Control-Z** on Windows) to undo the last action, because I find it best to make the largest possible continuous shape to increase the smoothness and overall flow of the shape.

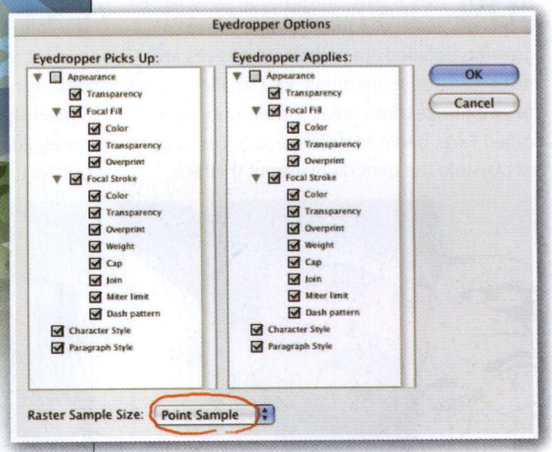
To recreate the look of *A Scanner Darkly*, you must think of lines as long, thin, irregular shapes filled with black

TIP

When you're using the Pencil tool and you need to smooth your path, hold down the **Alt** key (Windows) or **Option** (Mac) before to start to click and drag. This temporarily activates the Smooth tool. When you're happy with the smooth stroke you've created, then simply release the key to return to normal drawing mode.



step 06 I call my next layer 'Shawn'. Each new subsequent layer will be placed behind the last visually or below on the layers palette. You want to always fill in behind what you've previously finished. Within each layer, create sub-layers categorized by features, such as eyes and mouth, to better manage all the shapes that you're creating. I will usually break that down further into four or five shades of colour, each on its own sub-layer.



step 07 Select which colours to use by sampling right out of the picture. Double-click the Eyedropper tool and change the Raster Sample Size at the bottom to 5 points to get a broad metering of colour. If you want a brighter colour for the foreground figures or a more specific colour selection, switch the Raster Sample Size back to 1 point.

step 08 Now you're ready to begin painting in the colour. Beginning with the 'Hair' on a new sub-layer, define the larger chunks or shapes of solid colour, starting with darkest shadows. Focus on making shapes that are descriptive and in tone with the others. Limit the palette to a few shades and place each new successive colour behind the other. You can move a shape behind another on the same layer or sub-layer by pressing **Apple-Shift-[** or by going to **Object>Arrange>SendToBack**.

step 09 Use a new sub-layer for each facial feature. Zoom in while you're drawing detailed areas such as the eyes and nose, and add more detail with smaller shapes to emphasize those areas. On the sub-layer called Face, begin to describe as accurately as possible the general planes of the face.

step 10 Continue to define the planes of the neck and shirt on a new sub-layer. Avoid using too many little shapes or it will draw attention away from the figure's face.

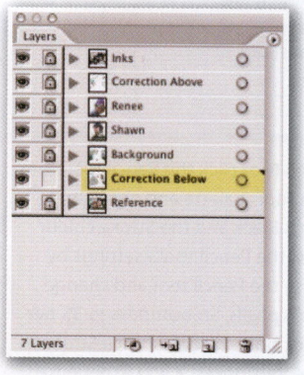
step 11 Repeat steps 7 through 10 on a new layer I call 'Renee'. In some images, you may want to balance the colours by reusing the same tones in different figures. Since I liked the contrasting warm and cool tones, I did not worry about colour balancing on this image.

step 12 Create a new layer – call it 'Background'. Look at the larger shapes of colour behind the foreground figures and define their outlines loosely. Too much detail in the background will be a distraction from the figures. You simply want a patchwork of colour to suggest an environment.

Avoid using too many little shapes in the neck and clothing areas, as this will draw attention from the figures' faces

TIP

Working with lots of objects can try your patience if they are accidently moved. To prevent this, select the object that you want to keep locked, then press **Control-Option-Shift-2** (Windows) or **Command-Option-Shift-2** (Mac). This will lock all other objects. To unlock everything, press **Control-Option-2** or **Command-Option-2**.



step 13 Once the whole image is filled in, create a new 'Correction Below' layer at the very bottom to quickly fill in any gaps in the image. Use colours from the upper layers and draw with large blobs. Don't worry about being too artistic here – you're just filling space.

step 14 Clean up your illustration by creating a new 'Correction Above' layer on top of everything but the 'Inks' layer. Unlock the Reference layer and drag the image out to the side to compare it side-by-side. Simplify your colour schemes and shapes. Zoom in to the image and cover over any unwanted ugly spurs in the shapes. Manipulate the shapes in all the layers with the direct-selection tool until you're satisfied with the results.

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Undersea lighting

The Personal Learning Edition of Vue 6 Infinite makes it easy to create underwater 3D scenes.

WHO

JAMES NOLAN
James Nolan is creative director of the Singing Bird Creative, and has over ten years of experience. He is also running a design collective producing exciting new projects for a varied client list.

CONTACT
www.thesingingbird.com

SOFTWARE
Vue 6 Infinite PLE

TIME TO COMPLETE
One hour

ON THE CD

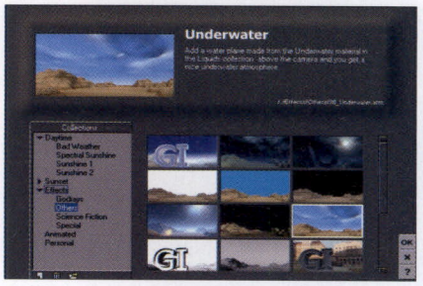
You'll find the full Vue 6 Infinite PLE software on our cover disc!

While many landscape tools such as E-on Software's Vue are primarily focused on dry landscape creation, Vue is equally at home submerged in underwater scenes. The trick for any underwater scene is to understand atmosphere and lighting – this tutorial will guide you through what you need to know.

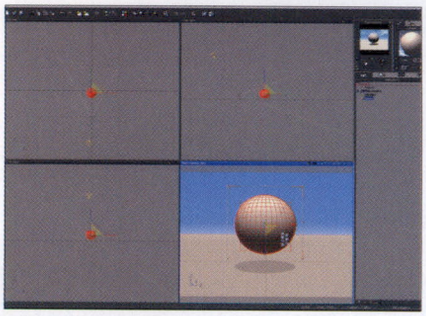
Light and atmosphere work differently underwater. Water is denser than air, and a wave ceiling in motion creates a unique lighting pattern – a dabbling of light – that creates exciting, murky landscapes that can then be populated with undersea life.

For this tutorial, we'll be using a caustics light gel to generate shafts of light penetrating the depths, as well as Vue's excellent EcoSystem to rapidly populate it with aquatic creatures. Everything you need is included on this issue's Digital Arts cover CD, so jump right in!

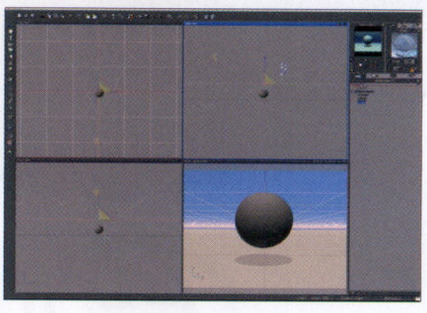
step 01 Install Vue 6 Infinite PLE from this month's cover CD, then start Vue. Click the New… icon (or choose **File>New**) and choose an underwater atmospheric by navigating the **Collections>Effects>Others** library that pops up and choosing Underwater. This provides a great starting point for the scene.

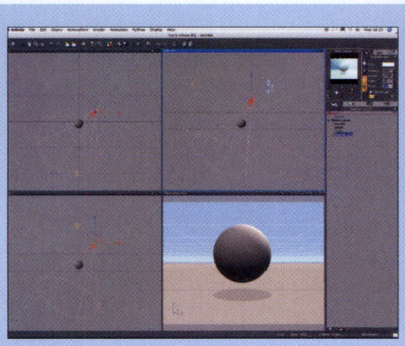


step 02 Next, create a sphere object by choosing **Object>Create>Sphere** (or by choosing it from the toolbar on the left) and drop it into the scene. With Vue in four-pane view, resize the sphere using the Scale tool – which is activated by clicking the sphere in any window – and choosing the small Scale icon from the floating list of icons. Next, use the Move tool in the same way to position this just above the ground plane.



step 03 Next, we'll add a water plane by choosing **Object>Create>Add Water**. Using the side view, move the water plane up above both the camera and the sphere object. Ensure the water plane is EcoSystem safe by clicking the tiny leaf icon located under the sphere in the upper-right 'Water' Aspect panel.

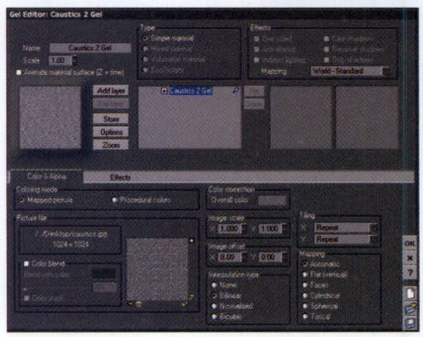




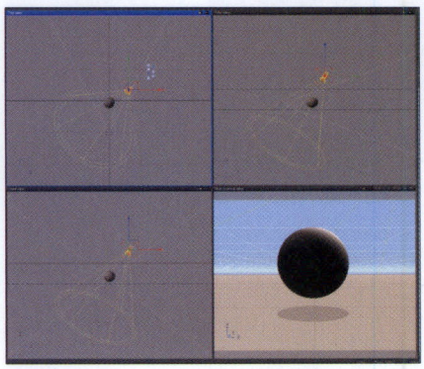
step 04 Create a Quadratic spotlight by choosing **Object>Add Light> Quadratic Spot light**. In the upper-right Aspect box, remove the lens flare, and make the spotlight volumetric. Beef up the power to 150 per cent and the spread to 27.5-degrees and falloff to 20.

step 05 We'll now add a light gel to our quadratic spotlight. To do this, click the light gel icon in the upper-right Aspect box (it looks like a chequered lightbulb) and choose the Caustics 2 gel from the Light Gels options in the materials box that pops up.

step 06 Double-click the square pattern preview in the Light Editor box that is currently showing. In the Gel Editor window, change the colouring mode to Mapped Picture (under the Color & Alpha tab), and double-click the black box under the Picture File section. Navigate to the cover CD, where you'll find the caustics.jpg file. Load this, and click OK.

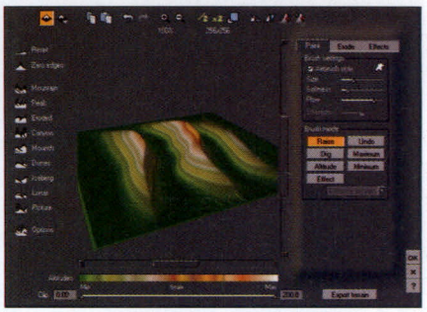


step 07 Now, we'll create some dramatic light effects. Choose Edit volumetric settings from the Aspect box, and ensure that the 'Show smoke or dust in light beam' is ticked. Increase the Intensity setting as well to 2.0 using the slider.

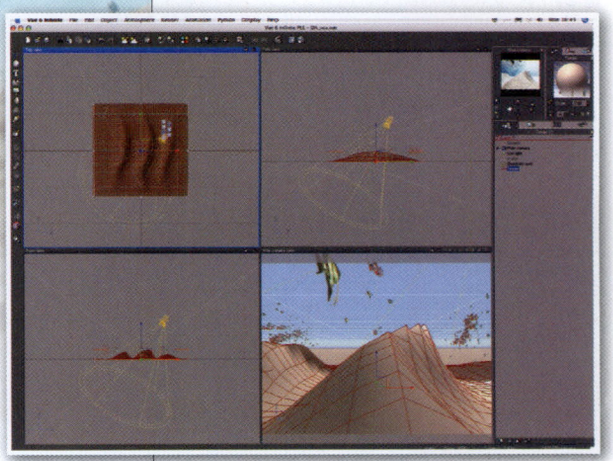


step 08 The sun light object, which is present in the scene by default, needs some tweaking. Using the top, front, and side views, move the sun light so its position matches that of the quadratic spot. You'll also need to rotate it so it shines in the same direction. In the Aspect box, ensure that lens flare is set to 'off', and untick the 'Point at camera' box.

step 09 With the sun light object still selected, click the Shadow icon in the Aspect box, and select Edit shadow and lighting. In the pop-up box, tweak the shadow density to downplay the shadows, and select the 'Soft shadows map – no hard shadows' option. Ensure that the Quality option is set to Auto.



step 10 We're almost there... Delete the sphere object as it was just for shadow and placement needs, then choose **Create>Terrain>Standard Terrain**. Double-click the terrain mesh that appears, and in the Terrain Editor that pops up, click Reset, followed by Dunes. You can add some erosion under the Erode tab (try Dissolve...) and then hit OK.



step 11 Double-click the sphere in the upper-right box labelled Terrain, and in the Advanced Material Editor box that appears, double-click the sphere. From the material library that appears, select EcoSystems from the Collections list, and choose Fish Schools. Choose 'Yes' to Vue's request to auto populate. Hit the Render icon (right on the top tool bar), and you're done.

WHO

CHRIS KEMPT

Chris Kemp-Salt is the MD and founder of Kempt, a digital marketing and production company that builds and promotes flash games for a range of clients including Sony, King of Shaves and the United Nations. In addition to this, Kempt run a casual online game portal, Killerviral.com. Their games receive many millions of visits every month.

CONTACT

www.kempt.co.uk

SOFTWARE

Adobe Flash Professional 8

TIME TO COMPLETE

One hour

ON THE CD

The game engine for use in Flash is included on this issue's CD

Building a platform game

Chris Kempt shows you how to use Adobe Flash to create a simple art-based platform game, based on Kempt's classic viral *The Kung-Fu Statesmen*.

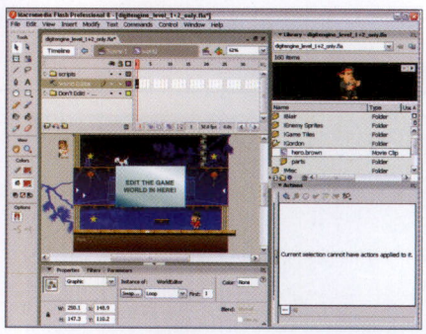
This tutorial is based on a simple engine that we used for a satirical game produced for the last general election. It was called *The Kung-Fu Statesmen* and we've kept the Tony Blair and Gordon Brown sprites in this example for you to have fun with.

The Kung-Fu Statesmen is a simple art-based platform game – the game is coded so that the player character's position and movement within the world is governed and augmented by the artwork of the levels themselves.

The game continually checks the character's position in relation to the walls and floors of the game world in order to establish whether the player can or should move in a given direction. Meanwhile, the player is in a constant state of freefall under the influence of gravity and it's only a collision with the floor objects that will stop him from falling off screen completely.

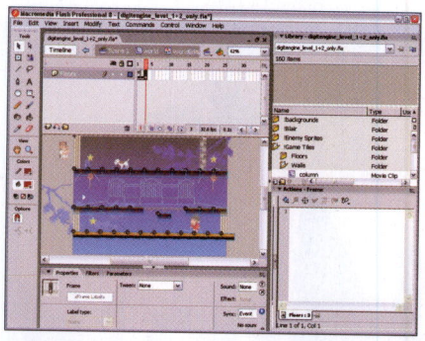
This tutorial is not intended to tell you how to build your own Flash games from scratch. Instead it aims to take you through level design for a simple game engine in the hope that, with a little extra research, you might be able to take this engine and produce your own custom Flash game. This tutorial assumes a basic familiarity with the use of Flash.

step 01 Open the Flash Project file (.FLA) and you'll see the main timeline with two frames labelled 'preloader' and 'game'. Locate the keyframe under the 'game' label and double click anywhere on the 'world' MovieClip in order to get started.



step 02 The game world is made up of six key MovieClips: the walls, floors, enemies, pick-ups, backgrounds, and starting points. Each of these have a series of frames corresponding to the levels of the game. Adding and editing levels in the game is therefore as simple as adding new frames to these and adding new scenery/elements to those frames. In order to make editing easier, and to reduce the chance of inadvertently breaking game code, all of these elements are contained in a graphic symbol called 'World Editor'. It is in this movie that we will do all our editing.

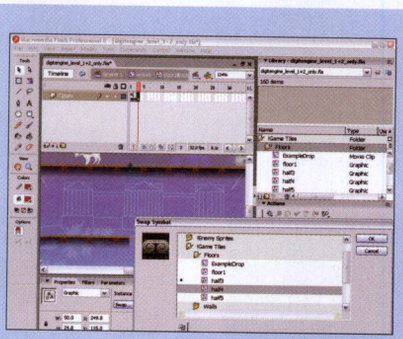
Step 03 Begin by double-clicking on the World Editor – the big box in the middle of the screen! In here we see all the level elements in one place. Once inside the World Editor, move the play-head to frame 3 and double-click on the 'floor' MovieClip. On the timeline of the 'floor' MovieClip click on frame 3 and add a keyframe (F6) that will duplicate the level in frame 2 in a new keyframe, ready for editing.



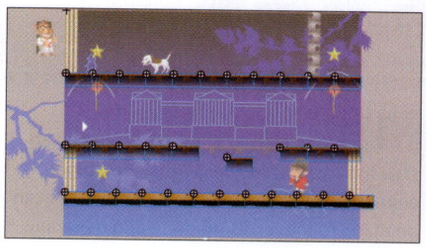
Step 04 Once inside this clip you'll see how the tiles are arranged on each frame. Within this frame you can add new tiles from the library, move around any existing tiles, edit tiles or potentially create entirely new tiles as you desire. However it's a good idea to observe the following rules:

- ***Always pixel-place your tiles (make sure their X and Y positions are integers – 5.0, rather than 4.9 or 5.1).***
- ***Make use of the snapping facilities provided by Flash.***

Floor tiles that are intended to be continuous stretches must not have a gap between them, and wall tiles must be perfectly placed to meet the floor properly.

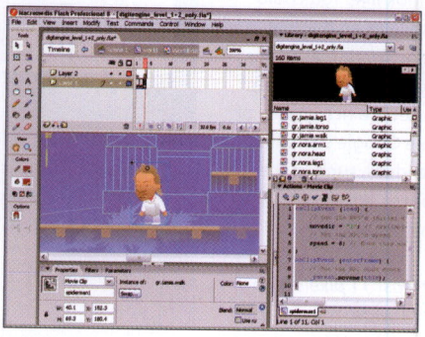


With this kind of game, it's crucial to remember where the character emerged on the last level. To do this, take a copy of the tile(s) from the exit point(s) on the previous frame and move them to the left-hand side ensuring that their Y position remains the same.



Step 05 Setting up walls for your new level follows much the same procedure as with the 'floors' MovieClip. Symbols can be added or edited in any way you like following the tips set out above for floors.

The background exists to make your game pretty. In here you can put any artwork that you don't want the player character to collide with during gameplay – in our example the backgrounds contain not only an illustrated backdrop but also foreground elements such as lamps and sections of floor we want the player to be able to pass through.



Step 06 Enemies are extremely simple in this game and the process of adding them is again similar to the last couple of examples with one key difference – each enemy needs a small section of code attached to it. Click once on an enemy and bring up your Actions panel – then add the following code in this panel (alternatively this code can be copied-&-pasted from one of the existing enemies in the engine).

Enemies are extremely simple in this game - but each one needs a small section of code attached to it

TIP

Vector or bitmap? When designing a Flash game, people tend to use vector art as it generates smaller file sizes. But, there are some loose rules that mean bitmap has its place. For animated or big images, it's best to opt for vector art. For complex images or icons, however, bitmap is a great option. Best to try it and see what works.

Step 6 continued

```
onClipEvent (load) {
// Set the NPC's initial direction of travel,
            movedir = "l"; // Available options
are "l"(left),"r"(right), "u" and "d" (up and
down).
// Set the NPC's speed
speed = 6; // Move this number of pixels each
frame.
}
onClipEvent (enterFrame) {
// Run the NPC code every frame whilst on
screen
            _parent.moveme(this);
}
```

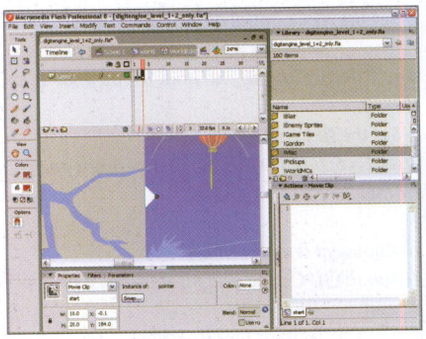
Step 07 Once again, items (or 'pick-ups') are placed in a similar way and in common with enemies require a small section of code in order to function. The easiest way to create a new item to pick up is to duplicate an existing item. However, be sure to add a unique 'id' in the onload() code for each item that you add.

All of the elements in this game are fully customizable, and, depending on your level of expertise, remarkable results can be achieved

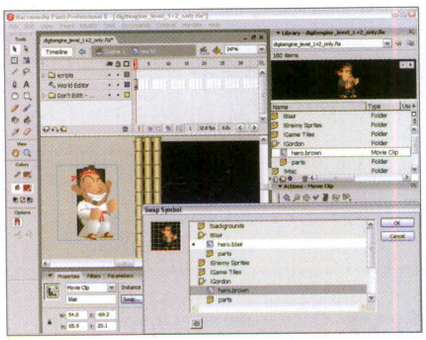
COOL CUSTOMIZER

All of the elements of this game are fully customizable and, depending on your level of expertise, some remarkable results can be achieved. For example, the engine that runs our more recent platform game *SuperWalkLand.com* is based on a heavily customized version of this engine.

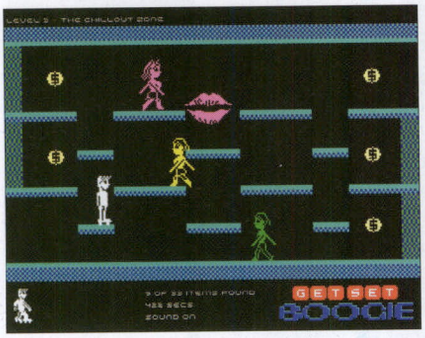
You could start with the Player Character, which can be customized with relative ease using your own animations. Look online – you'll find screen grabs from classics such as *Super Mario* or *Jet Set Willy*, which may help you to work out your own characters. Or you could put together an opening screen that lets the player choose whether to play as Tony or Gordon.



step 08 When a Player Character dies they are returned to the previous screen in a predetermined place. This restart position is dictated by the markers in this MovieClip. Each level must therefore have a start point. To create a start point for your new level simply add another frame as before to the 'startpoints' clip and position your marker accordingly, ensuring that the instance name is 'start'.



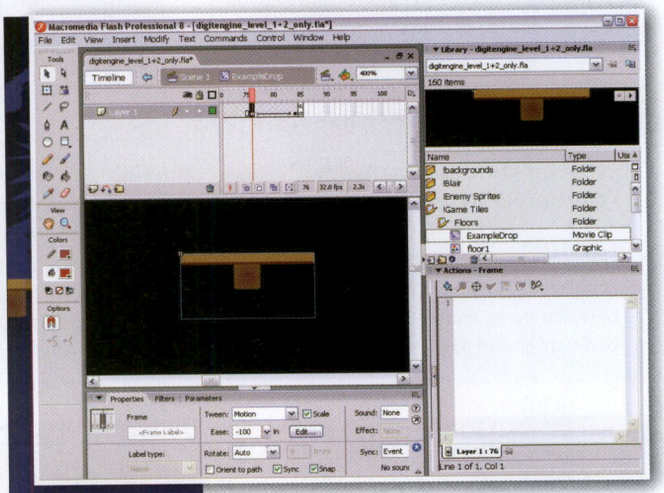
step 09 For a bit of variety we've also provided the 'Gordon' character to use. To swap Blair for Gordon, simply select Blair on the stage and on the properties tab click "swap", locate hero.gordon in the library, click OK, and you're done.



step 10 There is no practical limit to what tiles can look like. You could consider mimicking the style of an original 8-bit game, using simple illustration as in our example, or even using textures from bitmap images. As ever, the Internet is a rich source of inspiration so some simple Google searching is bound to turn up some ideas, such as the Get Set Boogie game (above). When designing new tiles bear in mind the following:

- *All floor tiles must be at least 11 pixels high and Walls must be over 11 wide. You can use shadows or transparent fills to widen artwork that needs to look narrower*
- *Always design your tiles to a round number of pixels in size (65 pixels rather than 65.43)*
- *Ensure that the registration of the symbol is top left with the artwork starting at 0,0. This makes it easier to place your tiles accurately*

Once you have designed your tile, place it in your level following the procedures set out above.



step 11 Once you've mastered the production of simple tiles you can take them a step further. With a little bit of animation (or, if you know how, code) tiles can be made to move, disintegrate and generally add variation to the game.

You might try to create a tile that falls away after a certain period of time. To do this you need a tile that is made up of a Graphic Symbol for the tile artwork which is contained within a MovieClip so that it will play of its own accord. Inside this MovieClip, simply add the number of frames you want the tile to exist for and, at the end of this time, add a short motion tween that drops the tile down and makes it disappear adding a 'stop();' action at the end to stop it looping.

An example of this is provided in the 'ExampleDrop' tile in the game library. DigitalArts

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AE grunge effects

Create a cool TV bumper – using mattes in Adobe After Effects and this handy tutorial.

WHO

HARRY FRANK
Harry stumbled into motion graphics as a starving musician. He lives in Detroit south of 8 Mile, earning a living as a designer, teacher, and rock star.

CONTACT
graymachine.com

SOFTWARE
Adobe After Effects

TIME TO COMPLETE
One hour

ON THE CD

You can follow the tutorial yourself by using the files provided on this issue's Digital Arts CD.

This tutorial will allow you to develop a deeper understanding about mattes, and how they can be used to apply texture and transparency to your layers in After Effects, by putting together a five-second television bumper in Adobe After Effects.

In this first part of a series of tutorials, you'll learn how to take advantage of greyscale images – mattes – in After Effects. Starting with some basic images (and the AE project file included on this issue's CD), we're going to dirty up some clean computer type to give it a realistic feel. You'll use 3D space for positioning the image, and use the images and textures supplied to create the five-second effect shown at the end of the masterclass.

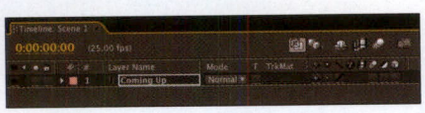
Remember, the key is to have fun, and apply what you're learning to your own projects.

TIP

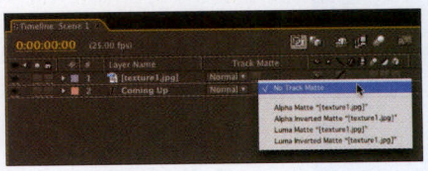
A 'matte' is any image that can be used to define the transparency of any given image – not to be confused with an alpha channel. At any given time in After Effects, we can take a look at the alpha channel that defines the transparency for the entire visible image in our composition. Black areas are transparent, white areas are opaque, and areas that are grey denote semi-transparency.

step 01 A matte is completely independent of the alpha channel, but works in a very similar fashion. A matte is any greyscale image that is used to define transparency. Each layer in After Effects can have its own matte. This can be done in several ways, but one way is to use a layer's Track Matte setting.

Create a new composition called 'Scene 1'. Let's start with the words "Coming Up" typed out with the AE Type Tool, as above.



step 02 Next, bring up the Modes column. If you cannot see the Modes column, right-click the column header, go to columns and select Modes. On the right side of the column, you see a TrkMat section. This allows any layer to use the layer immediately above in the stack order as a matte. Currently it has no options, because there is not an image above the layer in the stacking order.



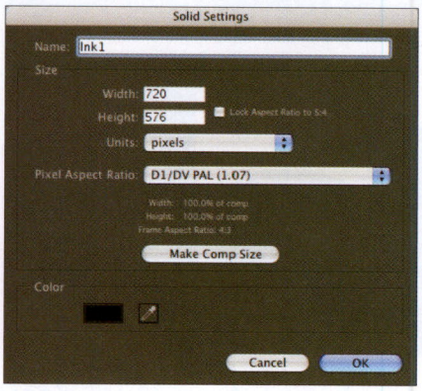
step 03 Place the image texture1.jpg just above the type layer. Now, under the Track Matte menu, four options will become visible.

step 04 As this image is a JPG, it cannot contain an alpha channel (embedded transparency). However, it does contain quite a bit of Luma (short for luminance) information, or greyscale imagery. A 'Luma matte' disregards the pictures colour information and only looks at the greyscale information.

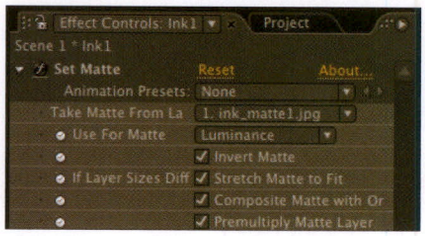
The Track Matte function lets us use the texture of this image as a matte, therefore applying that greyscale information to the transparency of the text. This is a great way to make 'perfect' computer type look more realistic. The other wonderful thing about track mattes is that they're independent of the layer below. Need a mask that doesn't move with the layer? A track matte is a perfect solution. An important note – if the track matte layer does need to move with the layer below, it can simply be parented.

step 05 Now you need to set the matte filter. Let's transfer imagery to the transparency of a layer. Refer to the image included with this tutorial, ink_matte1.jpg. This is a greyscale ink splatter image. There is no transparency in the image, but, as we've learned, a greyscale image is just transparency in the waiting. We can easily apply this JPG to the transparency of another image.

This time, instead of a track matte, an effect called Set Matte will be used. Create a new black solid: **Layer>New>Solid**. Call it 'Ink1' and make it the size of the comp.



step 06 Next, you apply the effect. Click **Effect> Channel>Set Matte**. Add the file ink_matte1.jpg to the comp and turn off the visibility. In the Set Matte settings, find the Take Matte From Layer setting and select ink_matte1.jpg. In the Use For Matte setting, set it to Luminance. Also, check the Invert Matte checkbox.

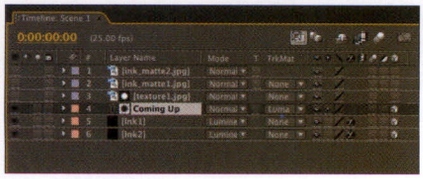


step 07 Essentially this image works the same way as a track matte. The luminance is used to define the transparency. This allows any layer in the comp to be used, and any part of the image: such as red, green, blue, channels, luminance, and saturation.

One thing to understand with this effect (and any effect in After Effects that references another layer like this) is that it only looks at the source of the layer. In other words, when the layer ink_matte1.jpg is defined as a matte with Set Matte, none of the transformations,

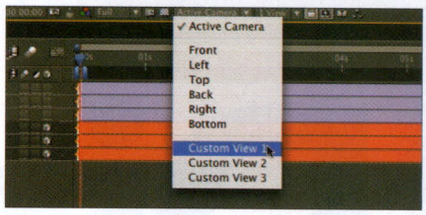
effects, and masks of that layer will be visible to the Set Matte filter, only the source image. However, the solid 'Ink1' can be moved wherever we want.

step 08 Repeat the above process for the image, ink_matte2.jpg, so you have this image (left).



step 09 You're now ready to position the image in 3D space. Turn the type and the ink solid layer into 3D layers by checking the 3D switches for these layers in the switches column.

step 10 Switch to Custom View 1.



step 11 You'll now see these 3D elements from a different perspective. Grab the Z handle of the type and drag it forward in Z space. With the Ink layers, grab the Z handles and push them backward in space.

NEXT MONTH

Part one of this TV bumper is sorted - in the next issue you'll learn to create a camera move between this and another comp using the 'collapsed transformation' switch, as well as nulls and cameras.

step 12 Now you're ready to try and create a second scene. Try constructing a "Next" animation, using the same elements and positioning, like the one above.

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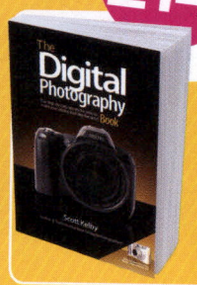

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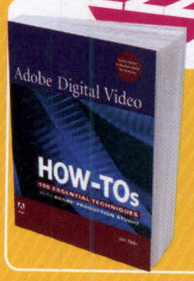

Adobe Digital Video How-Tos

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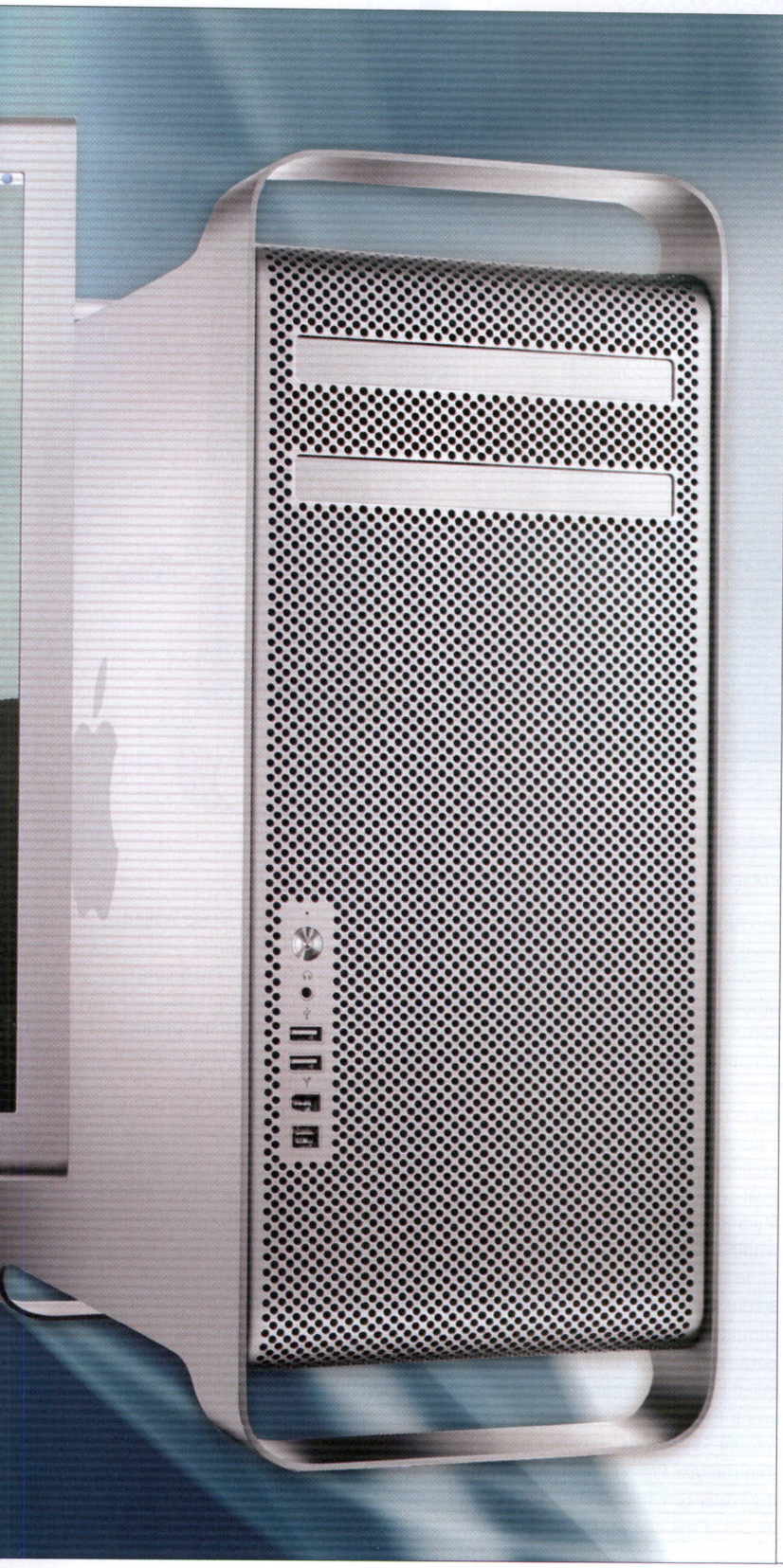
★★ *Fundamentally flawed*
★½ *Lacks any redeeming features*
★ *Avoid*



GRAPHIC WORKSTATION

Mac Pro-8 core

Apple is a late entrant into the 8-core workstation market – we reviewed the first model with two quad-core Xeons back in November – but its new Mac Pro will be of great interest to pro creatives working on high-end 3D and video projects.

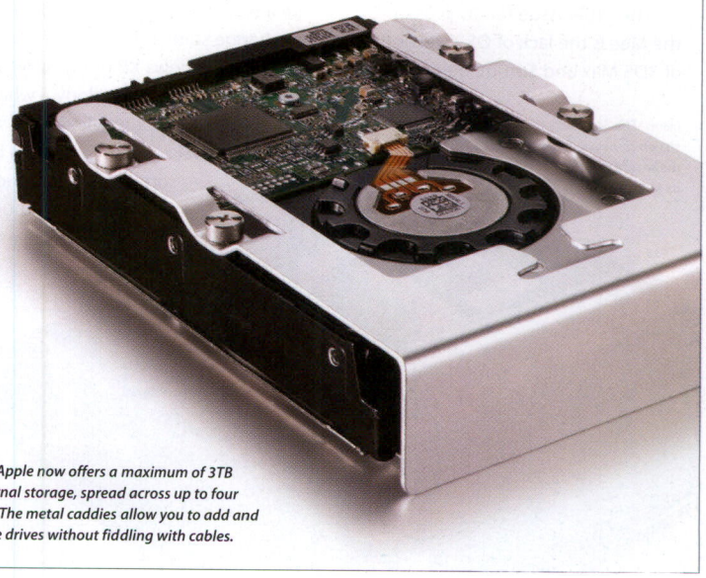
Arriving with little fanfare – it popped up just before Easter on Apple's Web site as an option for buyers configuring the Mac Pro – Apple's latest Mac bears two new, faster Xeon processors that aren't available anywhere else. It also ships at a cost much lower than equivalent Windows workstations – though it's still too pricey for most designers, illustrators and motion-graphics artists.

The new Xeon chips have four processor cores each with a clock speed of 3GHz, slightly faster than the 2.66GHz X5355 models used by all other eight-core Xeon-based systems we've seen. Intel hasn't released details of the name of the new chip – Apple refers to all Xeon chips by speed not name – or when it will available through other workstation vendors.

Compared to the Mac Pro we looked at in our group test in our December 2006 issue – which had two 2.66GHz dual-core Xeon 5150 chips – the performance boost provided by the quad-core chips in processor-intensive tasks such as rendering 3D scenes or video effects is obvious. In Cinebench 9.5, the benchmarking suite based on Maxon's Cinema 4D 9.5 3D animation application, the new Mac Pro attained a rendering score of 2,318 – 4.74 times faster than using a single processor core. This is almost 68 per cent faster than the older dual dual-core Mac Pro.

The Mac Pro 8-core's score was also over eight per cent faster than Armari's Magnetar QX, the first eight-core model we reviewed in December 2006.

Our main other cross-platform creative application that we use for testing is Adobe After Effects. This hasn't been released in an Intel-native form yet – the Production Premium version of Adobe's Creative Suite 3 won't ship until late summer. It's therefore not surprising that rendering our ten-second multi-layered HD composition in After Effects 7 Professional was somewhat sloth-like compared to on the Magnetar QX – 4 minutes 21 seconds against Armari's



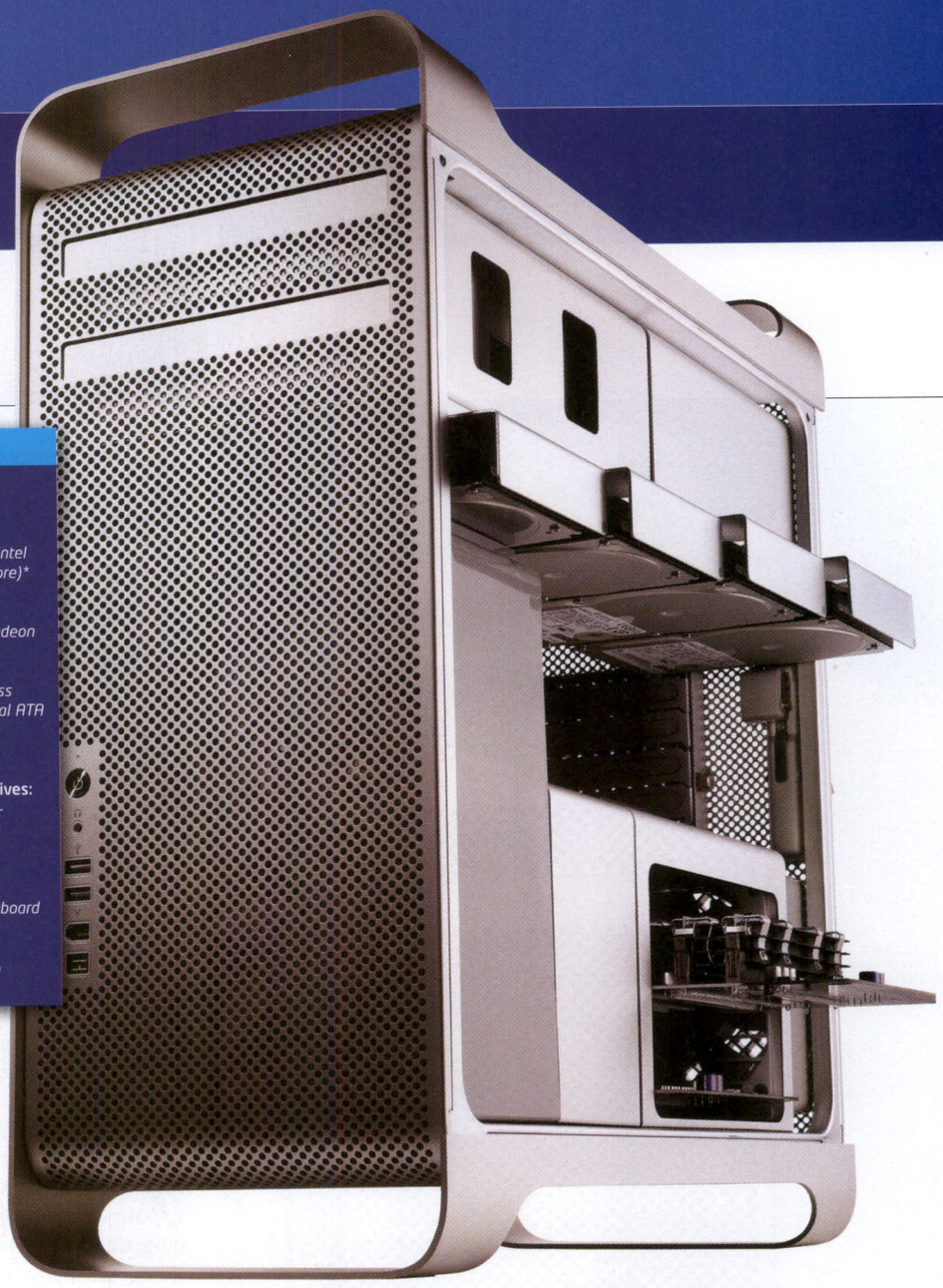
above: ***Apple now offers a maximum of 3TB of internal storage, spread across up to four drives. The metal caddies allow you to add and remove drives without fiddling with cables.***

bang-on 3 minutes. On both machines, rendering was accelerated by GridIron Software's Nucleo plug-in, which optimizes AE's use of multi-core and multi-processor set-ups.

However, the Mac Pro 8-core rendered the scene over five times faster using Nucleo than without it – and over three times faster than a Mac Pro with two dual-core processors. When After Effects CS3 Professional ships – which adds an Intel-native version and full built-in multi-core/processor support – we expect the Mac Pro 8-core to be an outstanding motion graphics and compositing workstation. Of course, the likes of Shake, Combustion and Media Composer are already Intel-native.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Processor (supplied): *2x Intel Xeon 3.0GHz (quad core)**
Processor (max): *2x Intel Xeon 3.0GHz (quad core)**
RAM (supplied): *4GB*
RAM (max): *16GB*
Graphics card: *ATI Radeon X1900 XT*
RAM: *512MB*
Connector: *PCI Express*
Hard drive type: *Serial ATA 3Gbps*
Size: *500GB*
Speed: *7,200rpm*
Removable media drives: *Sony NEC Optiarc AD-7170A 18x dual-layer DVD±RW/RAM*
Soundcard: *on board*
OS: *Mac OS X 10.4*
Keyboard: *Apple Keyboard*
Mouse: *Apple Mighty Mouse*
** Model number currently unavailable*



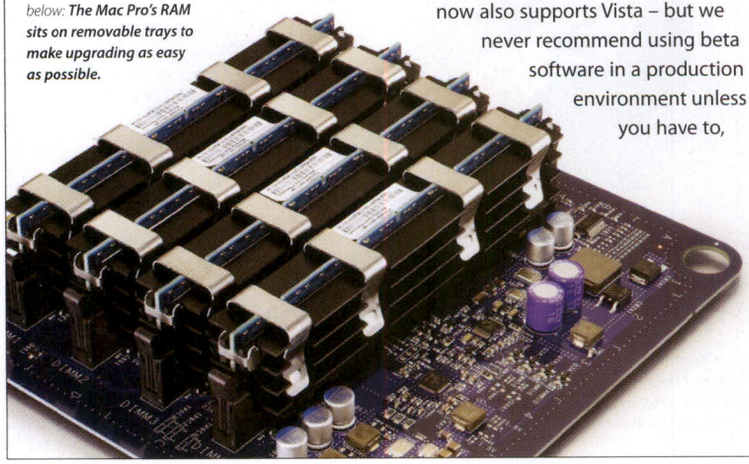
above: ***The Mac Pro's innards all click into place, which makes it easy for users to get inside and add to or upgrade the components.***

Board of Apple

Less impressive, though, is the Mac Pro 8-core's 3D capabilities. This Mac's real-time 3D performance in Cinebench is worthy considering the included ATI Radeon X1900 XT graphics card – but if your creative work is of a level that you can justify paying for a eight-core workstation, you're probably going to need nVidia's Quadro FX 4500 workstation-class board. Replacing the X1900 with the FX 4500 increases the cost to £3,606 plus VAT – and the FX 4500 is the only workstation-class board that Apple offers. The option of an FX 3100 would have been better.

The other issue for 3D pros on the Mac is the lack of OS X versions of 3DS Max and Softimage|XSI. This isn't a problem if you're committed to Maya or LightWave – though we're still waiting for the LightWave 9.2 update to make it Intel-native – but it could be a pain if you or your studio decide to change suite. You could run Max or XSI in Windows XP using Apple's beta Boot Camp technology – which now also supports Vista – but we never recommend using beta software in a production environment unless you have to, and Autodesk and Avid probably wouldn't give you support if you did.

below: ***The Mac Pro's RAM sits on removable trays to make upgrading as easy as possible.***



We ran our standard image processing test in both the non-Intel-native Photoshop CS2 and the beta of native Photoshop CS3 Extended, which applies a series of 20 filters, adjustments and transforms to a 200MB image. The CS3 beta wasn't available when we looked at the dual dual-core Mac Pro and the eight-core Magnetar QX, so we only have scores within CS2 for those models.

In Photoshop CS2, the Mac Pro 8-core took 2 minutes 20 seconds to complete the actions – about half way between the 2 minutes 40 seconds taken by the dual dual-core Mac Pro and the eight-core Magnetar QX's 1 minute 55 seconds. However, it's likely that the Mac Pro 8-core outpaced the dual dual-core model due to our test model of the new Mac having 4GB of RAM, while the older unit we looked at late last year had 2GB.

By contrast, the Mac Pro 8-core completed the same actions in Photoshop CS3 in only 1 minute and 26 seconds – a massive improvement.

Quad-core chips aside, the only other new addition to the Mac Pro is the option of up to four 750GB hard drives, for a total of 3TB of 3Gbps Serial ATA storage – up from 2TB (four 500GB drives) on older models.

Good value

The Mac Pro is still an impressive piece of kit, though. Its air-conditioning unit-style industrial design is starting to date but it's quiet and easy to get inside and add or swap out components. The cable-free drive system – where you can pull out and push in drive caddies – is still innovative. The merits of the Mac OS

Test results

The dual dual-core Mac Pro has two 2.66GHz, dual-core Intel Xeon 5150 processors, 2GB of RAM, a 250GB/7,200rpm hard drive, an nVidia GeForce 7300GT graphics card with 256MB of RAM, and costs £1,606 plus VAT. The Magnetar QX has two 2.66GHz quad-core Intel Xeon X5355 chips, 8GB of RAM, an ATI FireGL 7350 graphics card with 1GB RAM, and costs £4,595 plus VAT.

For the After Effects and Photoshop tests, shorter bars are better. For the Cinebench tests, longer bars are better. See page 80 for more details on these tests.

TEST	Apple Mac Pro *(dual dual-core)*	Apple Mac Pro 8-core	Armari Magnetar QX
Adobe After Effects 7 Professional *(Nucleo rendering)*	13mins 50s	4mins 21s	3mins 0s
Adobe After Effects 7 Professional *(standard rendering)*	24mins 50s	21mins 41s	10mins 52s
Cinebench 9.5 – rendering	1381 (3.15x)	2318 (4.74x)	2137 (4.71x)
Cinebench 9.5 – real-time 3D	4433 (8.41x)	3735 (6.48x)	5117 (9.77x)
Adobe Photoshop CS2	2mins 39s	2mins 20s	1min 55s

The main reason to buy the Mac Pro isn't performance - which is impressive - the main selling point is the price

X versus Windows is an article in itself, and largely it comes down to personal preference – though it's a shame we'll have wait until October to get full support for running Windows on a Mac Pro.

The main reason to buy the Mac Pro isn't its performance – which though impressive is what you'd expect from an eight-core workstation with slightly faster chips than previous models. The main selling point is the price.

We specced up a similarly-configured Magnetar QX on Armari's Web site – though we had to choose 2.66GHz Xeon chips and a newer Sapphire ATI Radeon X1950XTX graphics card – and it costs £3,134 plus VAT: £278 more than our Mac Pro. Adding the Quadro FX 4500 to each configuration took the Magnetar QX's price to £4,036 plus VAT, £430 more than the equivalent Mac's £3,606. However, with the Magnetar you have more graphics card options, so you could save a few quid on that front.

Against a Dell Precision 490, the Mac Pro was even more of a bargain. Dell doesn't offer gamer cards for its workstations, so we had to spec up a model to match our Mac Pro with the Quadro FX 4500 board – as well as the 2.66GHz Xeon chips – which came to £5,227 plus VAT, a whopping £1,622 more than the equivalent Mac.

Though out of reach of most traditional Mac-based creative professionals, if your work gives you the budget to spend more than £2,800 on a workstation, the Mac Pro 8-core is currently the best-priced option on the market.

Neil Bennett

SCORE: ★★★★½ Digital Arts Best Buy

Contact details

Apple, *www.apple.com/uk*
0800 783 4846

Info/System requirements

format: Mac OS X 10.4

price: £2,263 plus VAT (base model), £2,857 plus VAT (reviewed model), £3,606 plus VAT (reviewed model with nVidia Quadro FX 4500 graphics card)

Summary

pros: Faster than other eight-core systems. Low price. Well-designed case.

cons: Lack of pro-level 3D card options.

AFTER EFFECTS PLUG-IN

Halide

Halide is the first release from UK plug-in newcomer Amber Visual. It's a 'film-look' plug-in for After Effects that's designed to compete with Red Giant Software's Magic Bullet Suite, manipulating video footage to give it the appearance of film. It still has a few rough edges, but Halide has a lot to offer.

The advantages that Amber Visual says Halide offers over Magic Bullet are speed and creative control. Halide is faster – in previewing and rendering footage, and in use.

Applying Halide works much the same way as Magic Bullet. You can start playing around with the controls in AE's Effects palette, but most of the time, you'll begin by selecting a preset 'look' and then tweaking it. Halide's collection of presets are better arranged than Magic Bullet's Looks – as they're split by type rather than being in one long list. They also provide a preview of how footage will be affected – rather than a generic shot – with zoom controls. As with Magic Bullet you can create, modify, save, and reuse your own presets.

A five-second preview of a standard bleach bypass on 1080p HD footage takes 25 seconds – compared to 37 seconds using Magic Bullet. Red Giant's plug-in tapped our workstation's nVidia Quadro FX 3500 graphics card, while Halide uses the CPU alone. A render of ten seconds of the same sequence took 57 seconds using Halide's preset, against 69 seconds using a Magic Bullet Look.

Once you've selected your presets, Halide offers a wide selection of tweaking tools including visual controls such as curves, and 3D RGB and hue wheels, which Magic Bullet lacks. They sit in a horizontal line, which can make AE's layout seem cramped if you expand the Effects palette to fit on a standard 1,600-x-1,200 screen – though its fine on a widescreen or HD display.

Halide provides strong competition to Magic Bullet, though it lacks that plug-in's grain tools, it doesn't work in editing packages such as Premiere Pro yet, there's no Mac version at this stage. If none of those factors matter, Halide is worth a look.

Neil Bennett

SCORE: ★★★★☆

Contact details

Amber Visual, *www.ambervisual.com*
01484 437 440

Info/System requirements

format: Windows 2000/XP

hosts: After Effects 5.5 or later

price: £499 plus VAT

Summary

pros: Fast. Flexible adjustment tools. Presets well arranged.

cons: No support for editing software or Mac OS X (yet). No grain tools. Can cramp AE's layout.

Halide's effects offer good quality results, and presets can be tweaked and saved as your own.

LENTICULAR PRINT DESIGN SOFTWARE

Creative3D

Though best known for those 3D plastic rulers we had as kids, lenticular imaging is used for anything from magazine covers from the likes of *Empire* and *Wallpaper** to animated posters on bus-stops and vending machines. It works by viewing an interlaced, multi-part printed image through a clear plastic sheet with parallel lenses moulded into the front surface. Effects can be pseudo-3D, simple animation frames, or flip (where one view suddenly changes to another).

Creating lenticular media has been a very expensive business in the past, as both the tools and output have been prohibitively pricey for most projects. HumanEyes is attempting to change this with its Creative3D software – an entry-level design tool for creating the elements you need to print lenticular media – and lens-free printing system, which uses conventional printers, but only works for backlit signage.

Creative3D can convert this digital photograph to give a realistic effect of stereoscopic depth.

Creative3D provides designers with full image-preparation tools including 2D-3D layering, flip and animation effects, in the same image if needed. However, it cannot output to print, so exported files must be passed to a printing company equipped with the far more expensive PrintPro software. It's currently Mac-only, but a Windows version is under development.

The cheapest print-capable version is the £2,500 Studio3D, which calculates and outputs interlaced paper proofs up to A2 size, using desktop inkjets and hand-positioned lenses. An unlimited-size production version for flatbed inkjets costs about £7,500, but high resolution offset litho versions can cost £12,000 to £20,000 depending on print size. These prices explain why there are only seven UK printers equipped to output HumanEyes lenticular files, although three more are running trials.

HumanEyes originally introduced its full-function PrintPro lenticular software in 2004, and updated it to version 2.0 in November 2006. This includes a coupled creative-only application that can be handed out freely to designers or photographers. The new Creative3D is essentially the latest version of the 'free' module, but decoupled so any designer can buy it and use it without being tied to a particular print supplier. It's only available for online purchase, unlike the other modules that are sold through UK distributor Turning Point.

The frames displayed here will eventually become interlaced stripes. A looped movie rotates the image to show the 3D effect.

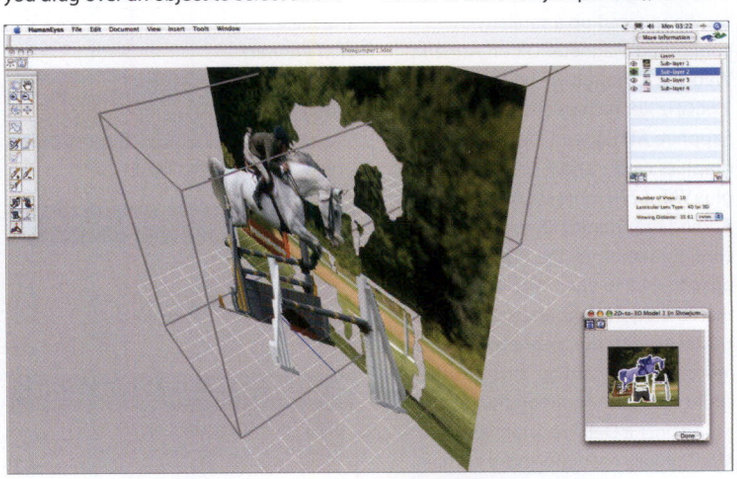
2D to 3D images

The original PrintPro could create stereoscopic 2.5D images from a sequence of about 100 frames taken as a camera moved on a boom arm. Most users, however, wanted to convert single conventional 2D originals without the hassle of special shoots. PrintPro 2.0 introduced '2D-3D' tools to create a depth illusion by separating image elements into layers.

2D-3D starts with a smart brush that you drag over an object to select all the relevant tones and edges and cut it out from its background. You then need to partly fill in the 'holes' left behind the cutouts so the background looks realistic in 3D. HumanEyes provides an automatic blur fill, but alternatively you can export layers to Photoshop and use its superior paint and clone tools. Updated layers are automatically re-imported. You can also create cutout layers from scratch in Photoshop and import them straight into Creative3D.

Next you switch to a 3D stage view and then simply grab each layer object and pull it out to the required depth in relation to other objects, rotating the whole stage to see what you're doing. Any object can be rotated within the stage (used for the angled jumping stands in our showjumper test), folded

The image has been imported into Creative3D where the horse and two stands have been cut out.



With the stage viewed in 3D, the horse and stands are dragged out from the background.

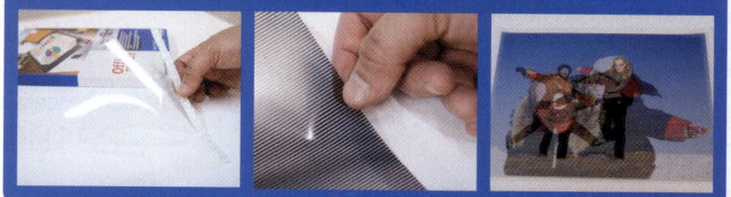
Lenticular production advances

If you've dismissed lenticular printing in the past because of the cost, it's now time to have another look. Not only is the software more affordable, it's also benefiting from ink and output advances – including ultraviolet-cured inks that can be printed directly onto the rear surface of the plastic lens material.

Offset litho presses are used for mass production, but large format flatbed inkjet printers (from the likes of Durst, Inca Digital, or Vutek) allow small runs and even one-offs to be produced economically. A limiting factor for all lenticular work, regardless of the originating software and print process, is the high cost of the extruded clear plastic lenses.

HumanEyes has recently announced a partial solution. Its lens-free method, included in the latest print-capable versions, works with flat plastic or glass, which is much less expensive. The interlace image is printed on the back face as before, but instead of moulded lenses, black parallel lines are printed on the flat front surface. These form a mask that blocks some of the interlaces and shifts as the observer moves.

The image must be backlit and works best with large format displays that are viewed from a distance, such as signage in bus shelters.



(say to simulate the edge of a box), or given a concave or convex bulge.

The 3D effect can be previewed on-screen by running an animated rotation loop. You can also display the static image as a colour or mono anaglyph image on-screen, which gives a stereoscopic effect when viewed through viewers with red and green plastic lenses. A cardboard anaglyph viewer is provided in the box if you order a CD version of Creative3D.

Layers can also be given animation, flip or transparent fade effects, controlled by a timeline menu.

Creative3D is certainly easy to use and has excellent features, but is likely to be hampered by high output costs.

Simon Eccles

SCORE: ★★★★☆

Contact details

HumanEyes, *www.humaneyes.com*

Info/System requirements

format: Mac OS X 10.4

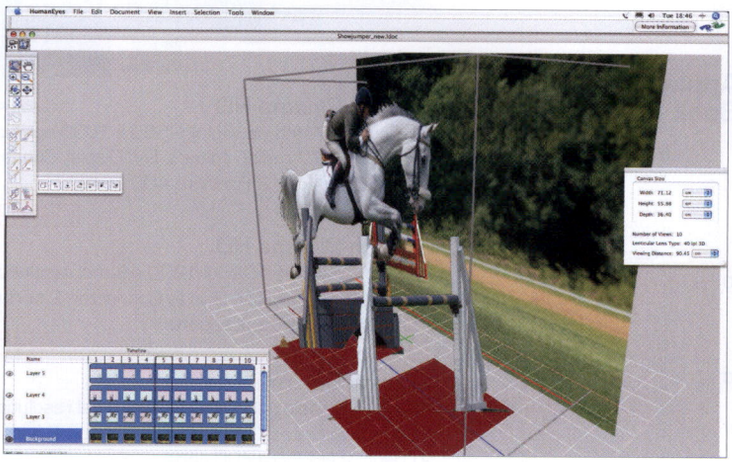
price: $299 (around £151)

minimum specs: Power PC G4/G5 or Intel processor, 1GB RAM

Summary

pros: Sophisticated but easy-to-use lenticular creation software. Can convert conventional photographs to layered pseudo-3D and also allows flip and animation effects.

cons: Creative3D can only print via far more expensive PrintPro versions. Few UK printers offer HumanEyes output to presses or large format inkjets.



Photoshop has been used to paint in the holes in the background layer, which is then re-imported.

10-MEGAPIXEL DIGITAL CAMERA

Ixus 900 Ti

The 900 Ti is one of Canon's pricier Ixus compact cameras. For not much over £200, you get a tough, attractive titanium body equipped with a generous 10-megapixel sensor, but the camera lacks a few of its siblings' high-end features such as optical image stabilization. The Ixus 900's 2.5-inch LCD may be smaller than the Ixus 65's 3-inch screen, but it's exceptionally bright and sharp, with a higher resolution of 230,000 pixels. It also leaves room for a small optical viewfinder – good for shooting under brightly lit conditions.

The controls on the right side of the camera seemed a bit cramped, but were easy enough to use. The manual mode doesn't offer full control over the aperture and exposure settings, but you can customize how the camera takes your shots. You can set contrast, sharpness, and saturation independently, and a variety of colour settings are available.

The Ixus 900 has a face detection feature that automatically selects the best focus and exposure. I was surprised at how quickly it locked onto the faces of people as they walked past – and it works for a range of skin colours too.

The Ixus 900's 10-megapixel sensor produced exceptionally sharp photos with little distortion. The camera also earned high marks for exposure accuracy, though it performed better in natural light than with a flash. Colour accuracy could have been better, as its performance was mediocre in our tests.

We compared nighttime shots with the Ixus 900 next to a digital SLR and an older compact camera. Significant amounts of noise are noticeable in the 900's shots as you increase its ISO sensitivity above 400, but it performed better than the older compact at the same ISO settings. The SLR was far superior: Its noise level at ISO 3200 was comparable to the 900's at ISO 400.

The camera accepts the new SDHC memory card format, though it ships with only a 32MB SD card.

Despite the noise, the Ixus 900 doesn't disappoint. It's one of the better compact point-&-shoots.

Paul Jasper

SCORE: ★★★★☆

Contact details

Canon, www.canon.co.uk
01737 220 000

Info/System requirements

format: Mac, Windows

price: £230 plus VAT

Summary

pros: High-quality output, face detection works well.

cons: Limited manual controls. Not the best output in artificial light.

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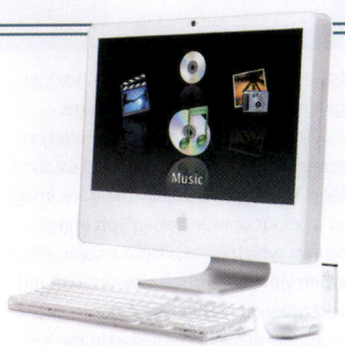

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10-MEGAPIXEL DIGITAL SLR

Nikon D40x

No more than five months after we reviewed Nikon's entry-level six-megapixel D40, the company has released an upgraded version, the D40x. Now carrying a 10mp resolution APS-C size sensor as well as a competitive price ticket, the new Nikon is clearly targeting the same market as Canon's EOS 400D and Sony's Alpha 100.

As well as the sizeable jump in image size, the new model has a lower minimum sensitivity of ISO 100, useful for control of depth of field in bright lighting. Thankfully, the D40x maintains the coveted and just usable ISO 3200 equivalent (H1) sensitivity, comfortably out-classing rivals' ISO 1600 ceiling. Also handy is a slight increase in continuous shooting rates from 2.5 to 3fps. It doesn't sound like much but the D40x feels more responsive than the figures suggest.

Measuring 126-x-64-x-94mm and weighing just 495g (plus lens), the D40x is seriously small and lightweight. It has larger than average controls though and it's well balanced, so the diminutive dimensions may only be an issue if you've excessively large digits. Mimicking the durable build of the maker's semi-pro D80, the D40x is also well made.

There are clever touches too, such as the peerless viewfinder image, two per cent spot-metering, the innovative sensitivity priority ISO Auto option and 1/500sec flash sync.

But it's not all good news. The D40x shares many of the same weaknesses as the D40, such as the uninspiring three-point AF system and slightly awkward selection of features from the data panel.

You still have to sidestep the first screen to access the shortcuts, which seems pointless, and the 2.5-inch panel lacks the handy proximity sensor of rivals. Battery life doesn't appear adversely affected but the screen's brightness can be particularly distracting when looking through the viewfinder.

Lens compatibility

The camera's main drawback, however, is the lack of auto-focus compatibility with certain, mainly older, lenses. That's fine for new adopters, perhaps, but a bind if you've a bagful of classy and expensive primes.

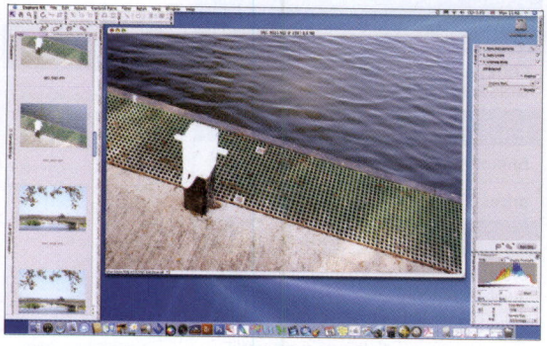
Like most digital SLRs, the D40x has a raft of shooting modes, including the expected scene-based presets for novices, but also plenty of overrides for creative control. These include a wide range of image parameter settings, white balance fine tuning (±three steps), simultaneous RAW and JPG capture, as well as automated in-camera retouching for underexposure and red-eye reduction.

Ultimately, although the D40x impresses with its build and image quality. It doesn't feel quite as user-friendly or as well-rounded as the EOS 400D or the Alpha.

Also bear in mind that it has no built-in sensor cleaning and you'll have to budget extra for image-stabilized lenses. Nevertheless, if you're in the market for a small, take-anywhere digital SLR, the D40x would make a solid choice.

Joanne Carter

In most shots, the increase from 6 to 10 megapixels is unlikely to be noticed but there's no denying the increase in fine detail over the previous offering.



Until its RAW files are compatible with Adobe Camera Raw, Nikon's £99 optional extra Capture NX is currently the best way to get the most the D40x.

SCORE: ★★★★½ Digital Arts Best Buy

Contact details

Nikon, *www.nikon.co.uk*
0845 450 0155

Info/System requirements

format: Mac, Windows

price: £425 plus VAT with AF-S DX Zoom-Nikkor 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6G ED II lens

Summary

pros: Durable build, with large bright viewfinder. Wide sensitivity range including ISO3200 maximum, 2 per cent spot-metering and fast flash sync.

cons: Autofocus limited to AF-S or AF-I lenses only. Menu dependant operation. No built-in sensor cleaning.

3D WORKSTATION

Imagine QX64

This new workstation from CAD2 is the first we've seen to offer nVidia's just-launched Quadro FX 4600 graphics card, which is also available separately through PNY for £1,128 plus VAT. It's an undoubtedly powerful board with a substantial price tag. You'd usually expect to see it paired with Xeon processors, but it works brilliantly in this quad-core Core 2 Extreme-powered workstation.

In our base-level Cinebench 9.5 real-time 3D test, the card returned outstanding results – delivering a performance boost that outpaced even ATI's top-of-the-line FireGL 7350 (which costs £1,175 plus VAT). However, in very complex scenes and in the SPECviewperf9 benchmark test – including both the 3DS Max and Maya tests – ATI's board was the winner, helped by its 1GB of RAM.

Power play

nVidia/PNY offers a more powerful card than the FX 4600, called the FX 5600. This boasts 1.5GB of RAM and a 76.8GBps memory bandwidth (compared to the 4600's 57.6GBps), but costs a whopping £1,684 plus VAT.

We were very happy with the Imagine QX64's performance overall. It's much faster in our Nucleo-powered After Effects test than the first workstation we saw with Intel's quad-core QX6700 processor, Armari's Magnetar QS (which we reviewed in November 2006) – though this may be helped by updates to the plug-in. The extent of its lead over the Magnetar QS in our standard AE, Cinebench, and Photoshop tests was more modest – but it's a definite improvement.

The QX64's power is bolstered by a well thought-out system of hard drives, where two smaller fast drives are striped as a RAID 0 array for the system drive, and then you have an additional slower, larger drive for your media. RAID 0 doesn't give a mirrored back-up like some other RAID numbers, but our tests confirm the performance boost it delivers.

With 4GB of RAM and its sights on the 3D market, the 64-bit version of Windows XP is the right choice for the QX64 – though we had no problems running Adobe's 32-bit applications. You also get a free upgrade to the 64-bit version of Vista for when all of your tools are running smoothly on that OS.

This workstation's chassis is imposingly big and black – though it's less so than the Bauhaus-inspired case the company also offers. It's well padded to keep system noise down to a minimum and all of the internal components are easy to get at. Our only quibble with its design is the positioning of the forward USB, FireWire and headphone ports, which are hidden round the side – to keep the design clear we guess – and hard to get at if you have this workstation under your desk.

The QX64 is an excellent workstation – though if you have the budget and real-time needs for the Quadro FX 4600 board, you'll probably want the processing power of two Xeon processors.

Neil Bennett

SCORE: ★★★★☆

Contact details

CAD2, *www.cad2.com*
01332 545 800

Info/System requirements

format: Windows XP 64-bit

price: £3,125 plus VAT

Summary

pros: High performance in 3D, video and graphics suites. Quiet, generally well laid-out case.

cons: Users may require more powerful chips. Odd forward port placement.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Processor: *Intel Core 2 Extreme QX6700 (2.66GHz quad core)*
RAM (supplied): *4GB*
RAM (max): *8GB*
Graphics card: *nVidia Quadro FX 4600*
RAM: *768MB*
Connector: *PCI Express*
Hard drive type: *Serial ATA 3Gbps*
Size: *2x150GB+500GB*
Speed: *10,000rpm+ 7,200rpm*
Removable media drives: *Dual-layer 18x DVD±RW/ RAM drive + 8-in-1 media card reader/floppy drive*
Soundcard: *on board*
OS: *Windows XP 64-bit*

above: ***The Imagine QX64 is an imposing unit.***

Test results

We tested the Imagine QX64 and compared its scores to a dual dual-core Apple Mac Pro and Armari's Magnetar QS. The CAD2 Imagine QX64 outperformed its two rivals in all of our tests - the table below summarizes the results.

The Mac Pro has two 2.66GHz, dual-core Intel Xeon 5150 processors, 2GB of RAM, a 250GB/7,200rpm hard drive, an nVidia GeForce 7300GT graphics card with 256MB of RAM, and costs £1,618 plus VAT. The Magnetar QS has a 2.66GHz, quad-core Intel QX6700 processor, 4GB of RAM, a 320GB/7,200rpm hard drive, an Asus EN7900GS/2DHT graphics card with 256MB of RAM, and costs £1,599 plus VAT.

For the After Effects and Photoshop tests, shorter bars are better. For the Cinebench tests, longer bars are better. See page 80 for more details on these tests.

TEST	Apple Mac Pro *(dual dual-core)*	Armari Magnetar QS	CAD2 Imagine QX64
Adobe After Effects 7 Professional *(Nucleo rendering)*	13mins 50s	4mins 21s	3mins 42s
Adobe After Effects 7 Professional *(standard rendering)*	24mins 50s	10mins 56s	10mins 54s
Cinebench 9.5 – rendering	1381 (3.15x)	1334 (3.0x)	1395 (3.11x)
Cinebench 9.5 – real-time 3D	4433 (8.41x)	3781 (7.16x)	6049 (11.31x)
Adobe Photoshop CS2	2mins 39s	1mins 48s	1min 39s

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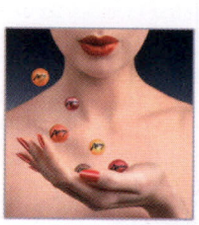

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Example: Cash price of equipment is £2,400. Total rentals payable on a two-year lease of the equipment under this promotion would be £2,400, spread over eight quarterly rentals of £300 each. (N.B. This does not include an additional lease administration charge of £99 inc. VAT. If you chose to lease the equipment beyond the initial two-year period, further rentals would also be payable.)

Authorised Reseller

Apple Financial Services

3D DESIGN SOFTWARE

Sketchup Pro 6

Though available in a free version for illustrators and artists, most 3D artists will prefer the £315 Pro version of 3D sketching tool SketchUp, primarily as it lets you export sketches into applications such as Maya and 3DS Max.

SketchUp's basic workflow involves manipulating drawn or polygonal objects within the perspective view of a typical 3D application. There are rotate, pan and zoom tools available in a fairly simple palette. 2D shapes are drawn with rectangle, circle and text tools, then extruded and lofted to form basic 3D objects.

You then build on these foundations by using a set of modification tools that offer functions such as lathe, sweep or Boolean operations, but have their own straightforward names such as Push/Pull, Follow Me and Intersect with Model. You can turn on additional tools, such as basic terrain editor Sandbox, and Ruby, a scripting environment.

The most high-profile addition is Photo Match, which lets you create a 3D model by tracing a photo or matching an existing model to a background photo. Like similar photogrammetry tools from RealViz and others, you can build up a 3D representation of a building or other real world object by using images shot from different views or you can just use a single photo. Perspective lines and an axis are overlaid on the image to specify orientation, and a modelling grid is updated accordingly.

Image mapping

SketchUp calculates the camera position and field of view of the photograph – if you know dimensions of the original object you can enter this info to make the model more accurate.

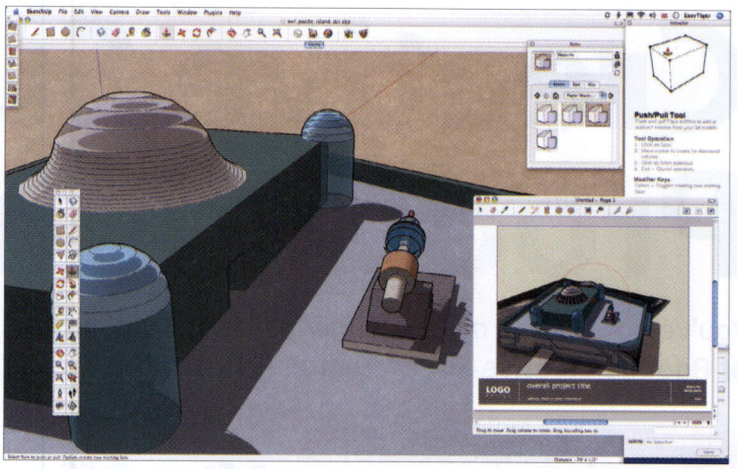
Once the image is mapped you can start drawing lines from the axis outwards, forming polygonal faces and models, then extruding from these to create new blocks. In practice this is a lot more fiddly than it sounds, and it takes time and a well-shot photo to get anything near satisfactory results.

Version 6 also adds a selection of display styles to present the model or scene in a variety of looks including 'sketchy' or to add a watermarked background. This works very effectively and, combined with the new Layout functions, can make any architectural mockup look stylish and professional, or quirky if that's the mood you're after.

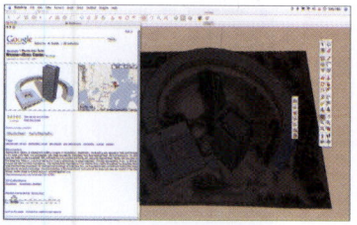
Other tools continue the architectural theme, including a walkthrough and cost estimation for materials. Entertainment-focused creative pros won't find much here to shout about though.

SketchUp Pro 6 offers little over version 5 – though as a free upgrade it's hard to complain. Overall, SketchUp Pro can be a great way for 3D artists to quickly produce previz versions of projects – although some creatives will be content with free version.

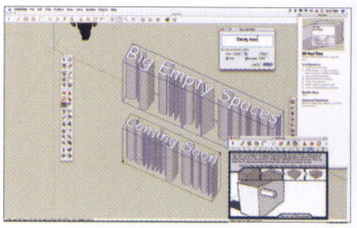
Michael Burns



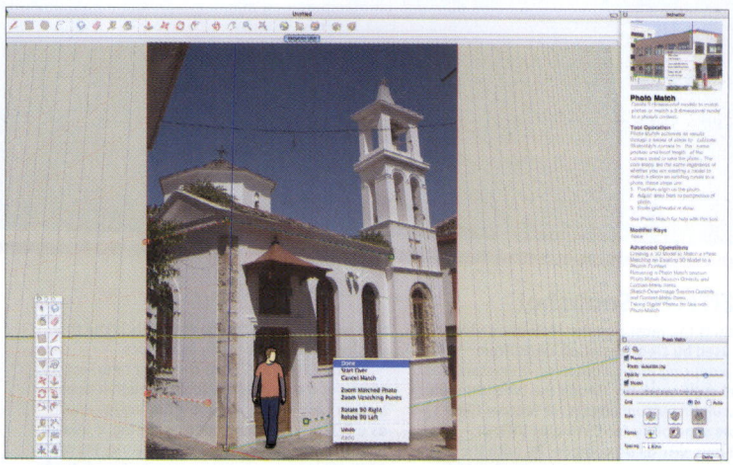
SketchUp features a number of modelling functions to build fairly sophisticated models, while Layout allows you to create professional looking design presentations from your SketchUp Pro session.



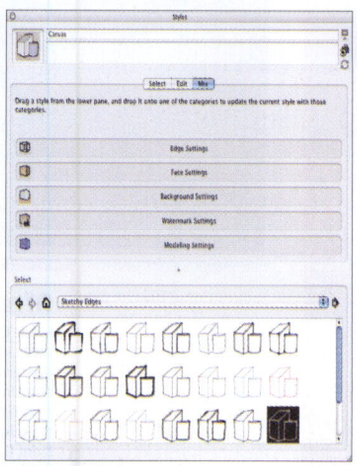
You can take full advantage of Google Earth and Google Maps to position your model in the real world.



The new 3D text tool will create both 2D and 3D text including fully extruded 3D text objects.



SketchUp Pro 6 now offers Photogrammetry functions to extract 3D data from photos. The camera, however, needs to be positioned carefully to produce a definitive axis from which to calibrate your picture and no trees or other obstructions should obscure the object or building.



Styles are collections of display settings, including new options like Watermark backgrounds and Sketchy Effects, saved in the new Styles palette.

SCORE: ★★★½☆

Contact details

Google, *sketchup.google.com*

Info/System requirements

format: Mac OS X 10.4, Windows 2000/XP

price: £315 plus VAT, free upgrade from older versions

minimum specs: 400MHz processor, 128MB RAM, 80MB free hard disk space

Summary

pros: PhotoMatch, useful display styles with additional editing and mixing capabilities. Extensive learning tools. Rapid model creation, and scripting tools.

cons: Care needs to be taken when building models. Effective use of Photo Match restricted to compatible digital images. No Vista support.

Creative Suite 3 Production Premium

You've got to wait a little longer to get your hands on the video bundle of Adobe's Creative Suite - Digital Arts dissects the beta versions...

words Neil Bennett

Though launched on the same day as the currently-shipping Design and Web suites, Adobe's Production Premium collection of video-focused applications won't be with us until late summer. However, as a recompense, the company has released the betas of After Effects CS3, Premiere Pro CS3, and Soundbooth CS3 through its Adobe Labs Web site – so we spent some quality time with these new tools to see whether they live up to the hype.

The three core video applications have gained less new tools than their cousins in the Design and Web suites – which isn't surprising since it hasn't been that long since their last update. Where the suite has expanded is with the addition of some new tools – On Location and Ultra – taken from Serious Magic, which Adobe acquired in 2006, and the brand new Soundbooth – replacing Audition.

The Creative Suite 3 Production Premium costs £1,199 and includes new versions of After Effects Professional, Premiere Pro, Soundbooth, Encore, OnLocation, and Ultra – plus the CS3 releases of Photoshop Extended, Illustrator, Flash Professional, Bridge, and Design Central.

We tested both the Mac and Windows versions of After Effects CS3, Premiere Pro CS3 and Soundbooth CS3 on Apple's new Mac Pro 8-core running Mac OS X 10.4 (reviewed on page 64), an Alienware MJ-12 8550 dual dual-core workstation running Windows XP Professional, and Rock's Pegasus 665 laptop running Windows Vista Home Premium.

After Effects CS3 Professional

After Effects: Snapshot

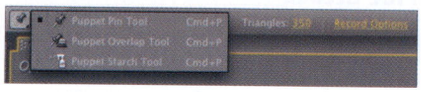
After Effects is the most popular of Adobe's video tools - it's used by creatives of all kinds, from designers producing motion graphics, animators creating cel-style work for TV and the Web, through to artists sculpting visual effects for feature films. It's available separately for £915 plus VAT, or from £209 plus VAT as an upgrade. As with the suite, there's no Standard version anymore, which Adobe says is because most users went for the Professional version anyway.

Previously the only application in the suite that was available for the Mac, this is the first version to run natively on Intel Macs.

After Effects CS3 has the most new features of any of the new video tools, though it doesn't include several that we were hoping for - such as a 3D tracker, background rendering, a usable Flowchart for node-based compositing, Illustrator CS3's colour scheme generation system or Boris Blue-style full 3D model import tools.

Still, several of the new features will enhance your video life, so read on...

After Effects CS3 includes the most new features of all Adobe's updated video tools

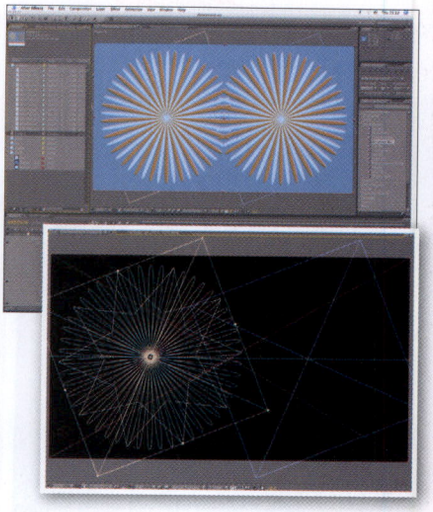


Puppet

The Puppet tool is a completely new addition. An odd offshoot of Photoshop's Liquify tools, this allows you to 'stick' a series of pins into a layer and then move them around - with the layer morphing organically as elements grow and shrink.

There's a lot of potential to this tool. It seems designed for cartoon-style animation or morphing graphics, but it could as easily be used instead of a warp effect for VFX work. Further uses are bound to occur to you with time.

The Puppet tool feels weird to begin with, but after a bit of practice it's actually very easy to use. As well as placing pins, there are also controls over the complexity of the underlying mesh that underpins how the layer morphs, an Overlap tool so that you can warp foreground objects over backgrounds on the same layer (such as from a still photo), and a Starch tool so that areas can be prevented from changing.

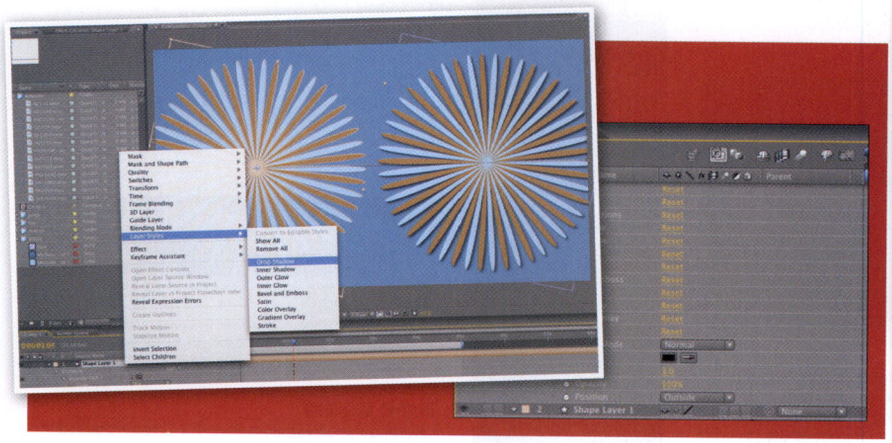


Get in shape

The new Shape Layers are designed so you don't have to go out to Illustrator to create vector symbols such as stars, polygons and rounded rectangles. Shape Layers sit on the timeline next to video, audio, text, and Solids - and can contain a stack of different shapes.

You add shapes through an Add button on the properties area on the Timeline (or by right-clicking on this area), as well as fills, strokes, gradients and preset path types. These can then be modified in the properties area and in the composition window in the usual way.

There is a lot of flexibility to the shapes. For example, for stars, you have control over the number of points, inner radius, outer radius, inner roundness and outer roundness, plus the usual Transform controls - and all properties are keyframable, so Each Shape Layer has its own Transform control. This lets you easily animate a stack of shapes as one.

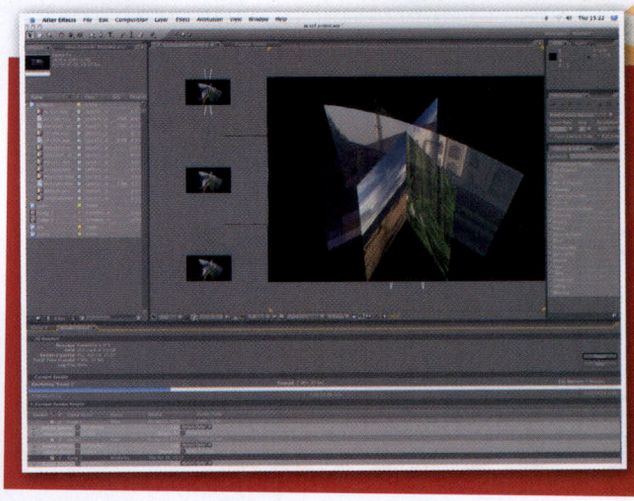


Playing with Photoshop

After Effects CS3 has purloined Photoshop's Layer Styles. These allow you to quickly add shadows, glows, bevels, and gradients to layers. It works very well with Shape Layers - though it's easy to overuse them to the point of cheesiness.

Other links to Photoshop include support for PSD files with Video Layers - though we didn't think they were that useful when we looked at Photoshop CS3 Extended last month. You can bring in simple 3D scene data created with Photoshop's Vanishing Point tool, though it would have been better if you could bring in and render 3D models as in Boris Blue.

We'd have preferred to have seen more taken from Illustrator than Photoshop - such as the new Live Color colour-scheme creator, though you can tap Illustrator or the Kuler online tool using AE's colour picker.



Performing arts

With After Effects 7.0, if you wanted to get the highest performance from the latest generation of multi-core/processor workstations, you had use GridIron's $149 (£74) Nucleo plug-in on Windows XP. With AE CS3, the software is inherently multi-threaded and runs natively on both Intel Macs and under Windows XP.

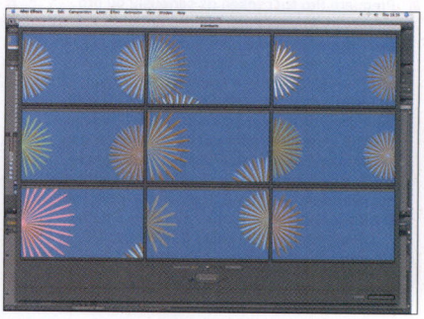
The beta of AE CS3 doesn't include all plug-ins, so we had to modify our standard AE performance test as used in our Reviews and Group Test sections. On the Mac Pro 8-core, the Intel-native AE CS3 took bang-on 4 minutes to render the 10-second HD scene, against 5 minutes 3 seconds using AE 7.0 with Nucleo and 23 minutes 6 seconds using AE 7.0 alone (both running using Apple's Rosetta emulation technology). That's a 27.5 per cent speed bump from being made Intel-native, and a huge 477.5 per cent boost overall.

Improvements on Windows were more modest - about 5-10 per cent - and multi-core support wouldn't work on our Vista-running dual-core Rock laptop due it only have 2GB RAM. You need 4GB or more to really take advantage of it.

Support for multi core set-ups has to be turned on in AE's Preferences. AE splits rendering into multiple instances of itself for each processor core, each of which requires at least 512MB memory of its own - so getting the best from eight cores requires about 6GB of RAM. AE is a 32-bit application - so limited to accessing 3GB of RAM - but as each instance is its own application, it can take advantage of as much RAM as your workstation has.

OTHER NEW TOOLS

- Colour management with support for colour workspaces for output targets.
- Cue point creation for Flash files.
- Batch rendering of Flash files.
- Clip notes for PDF-based client review and feedback.
- Device Central for testing video output for mobile devices.



Random inspiration

Brainstorm is a brand new system that aims to let you discover possibilities with your work that don't automatically come to mind. It creates variations of your work based on parameters that you select: suggesting different colours, animations and effects variables. These appear in a grid of nine - and if there isn't one you like, you can ask for a new set.

The problem is that Brainstorm isn't very useful, and we found it took a long time to come up with decent suggestions - time that would have been better spent thinking or looking for inspiration elsewhere.

Brainstorm works seemingly without rules beyond how much it can randomly change parameters. It's a car cry from the Live Color colour-scheme generator in Illustrator, which uses art-school rules to suggest colours that work together. In comparison, Brainstorm is a novel idea with few real-world applications.

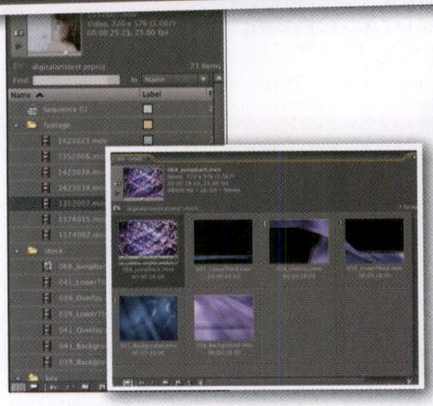
Premiere Pro CS3

Premiere Pro: Snapshot

Premiere Pro isn't taken as seriously by pro editors as Apple's Final Cut Pro or Avid's Xpress Pro - but it's become a lot more grown-up since taking on the Pro sobriquet in 2003.

Though this is the first version of the NLE since then, the CS3 version adds little for Windows users beyond what was in Premiere Pro 2.0 - which is disappointing - though you do get the full version of Encore (née Encore DVD - see below) thrown in, rather than it being sold separately. You also get On Location (née DV Rack by Serious Magic - see below right).

Premiere Pro CS3 costs £599 plus VAT. Upgrades begin at £209 plus VAT.



Bin laden

Premiere Pro CS3 allows you to have more than one Project panel open at one time, so you can open bins in their own floating window as in the traditional Avid interface. This makes it easier to rearrange the structure of your assets to make finding what you need easier.

If you're less of a neat-freak, the new version of Premiere now has a find system in the Project panel that begins whittling down your assets as you type the first letters of the term you're looking for - just like Mac OS X's Spotlight or Windows Vista's search. You can also choose which type of data you want it to search for, from an exhaustive list that stretches from Name and Frame Rate to Duration and In Point. It doesn't aspire to be as good as Bridge CS3, though.

These are solid - but in no way major - additions to Premiere Pro toolset, and they do make working with larger projects easier.

OTHER NEW TOOLS

- Output to mobile devices using the Adobe Media Encoder and test using Device Central.
- Export timeline markers as cue points in Flash video for use in interactive media.
- Video with nested audio sequences plays in real-time without rendering.
- Replacing one clip with another on the timeline while keeping the original's attributes and settings.
- Keyboard shortcuts for moving between workspace panels.

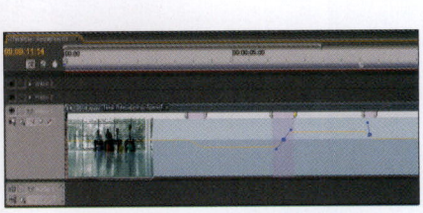
Mac attack

The last version of Premiere to be released on the Mac was 6.5 - an aging precursor to Pro that couldn't keep up with the youthful Final Cut Pro. It also has strong competition on the Mac from the powerful if unforgiving Avid Xpress Pro. It's odd that Adobe has launched a Mac version, but making the software cross-platform so you can choose your editor then your platform is to be applauded - and something Apple is very unlikely to ever offer.

In our tests, Premiere on the Mac ran almost exactly the same as the Windows version - capture wasn't working on our Mac build, though the Windows version couldn't capture HDV for licensing reasons. To users of Final Cut Pro or Avid who haven't used After Effects, Premiere Pro will seem a little unusual. Its interface is simple and mouse-click-driven, in contrast to Avid's reliance on keyboard shortcuts and focused tools for an efficient workflow - and Final Cut is the bastard child of the two.

Premiere Pro is a great editing application - and the integration with After Effects, Encore and the rest of the suite is excellent - but it looks like Final Cut's mix of the best of Avid's and Adobe's heritage will still offer the best editing experience for the foreseeable future.

Premiere Pro CS3 is also the first version to be available for Windows XP.



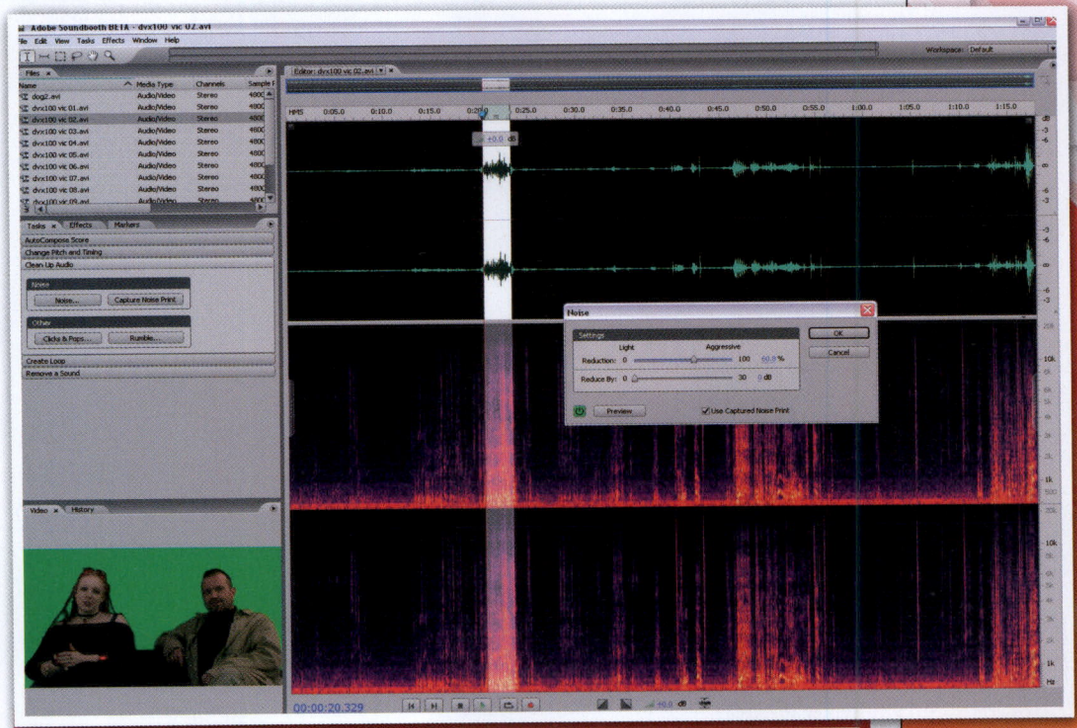
Time again

Following the timeline-based opacity controls added in Premiere Pro 2.0, Adobe has added similar controls for slow-, fast- and backwards-motion. You add keyframes to the yellow bar that runs through the middle of each clip, and then pull the line to speed up or slow down the time - with a visual preview of how this affects the overall length of the clip.

You can also break apart keyframe to access bézier curve controls over acceleration and deceleration, for more creative effects.

The quality of the fast and slow motion is great, but as with the opacity controls, working with them on the timeline can be fiddly unless you zoom in and stretch the height of the track, which can be time-consuming.

Soundbooth CS3

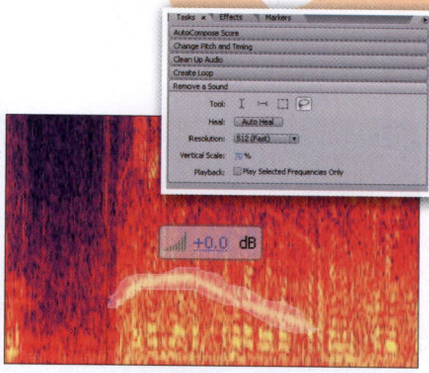


Soundbooth: snapshot

In previous collections of its video software, Adobe included Audition, which it had acquired from Syntrillium Software in 2003. Audition was aimed at users with a background in audio production – it wasn't for video editors, compositors, and motion graphics artists who just want to clear up audio, apply specific effects or compose. You could easily do all that in Apple's Soundtrack Pro.

To cater for these users, Adobe introduced Soundbooth as a public beta in October last year. A second beta was released in December, and the CS3 beta launched in April adds few additions to that – though it does fix many bugs. However, the current beta is still very unstable – the wobbliest of any CS3 beta we've seen. It crashed about once an hour in our testing, an issue that Adobe needs to fix as a priority before the final software is released.

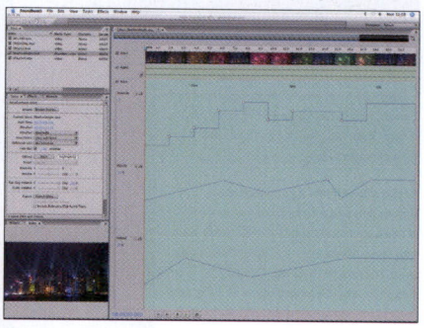
Soundbooth is available as a standalone application for £139 plus VAT.



Effect and control

Soundbooth includes tools for most of the tasks that visual-based digital creatives are going to need to perform with recorded audio. The standard noise removal tools are assisted by the newly added noise-print creation tool. This creates a map of a certain sound in one clip so that it can remove it from another – usually for removing a monotonous background noise.

You also have 15 filters including reverb, echo, EQ and time and pitch stretch – five of which can be combined in real time. More innovative is the 'Healing Brush' for smoothing areas in a visual spectral graph of a sound. It works just like Photoshop's healing brush.

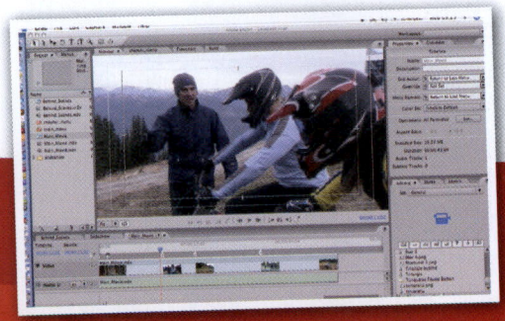


Loop guru

Soundbooth includes the AutoCompose system, which is broadly similar to Apple's SoundTrack Pro's loop-based score-creation tool – though it focuses on users modifying pre-arranged soundtracks rather than building their own from individual loops.

Loading AutoCompose Scores, as Adobe calls these arrangements, has to be performed through Bridge, which is odd. Once you've loaded the Score though, it modifies itself to match the length of your clip and you can further customize it by adjusting values of Intensity and Melody. These values can also be crudely keyframed over time, as can volume.

The system is easy to use and effective if you're not musically-minded. However, it's not as integrated with Premiere as SoundTrack Pro is with Final Cut.



Other suite components

As Digital Arts went to press, only the betas of After Effects Professional CS3, Premiere Pro CS3 and Soundbooth CS3 were available. The Creative Suite 3 also introduces a new version of Encore, plus two additions to the suite: On Location and Ultra.

Now included free with Premiere Pro CS3, Adobe has dropped the DVD suffix from Encore's name as it can now create HD discs in Blu-ray Disc format. You can't create HD-DVD discs, which is a shame – but most authoring tools seem to favour one HD format over another. Encore can also encode and use only MPEG-2 and MPEG-4 AVC (better known as H.264) codecs for HD video, not VC-1.

Encore doesn't include any new creative tools to take advantage of Blu-ray's higher level of interactivity, and those creating complex items will probably want to use a high-end system such as Sonic Scenarist.

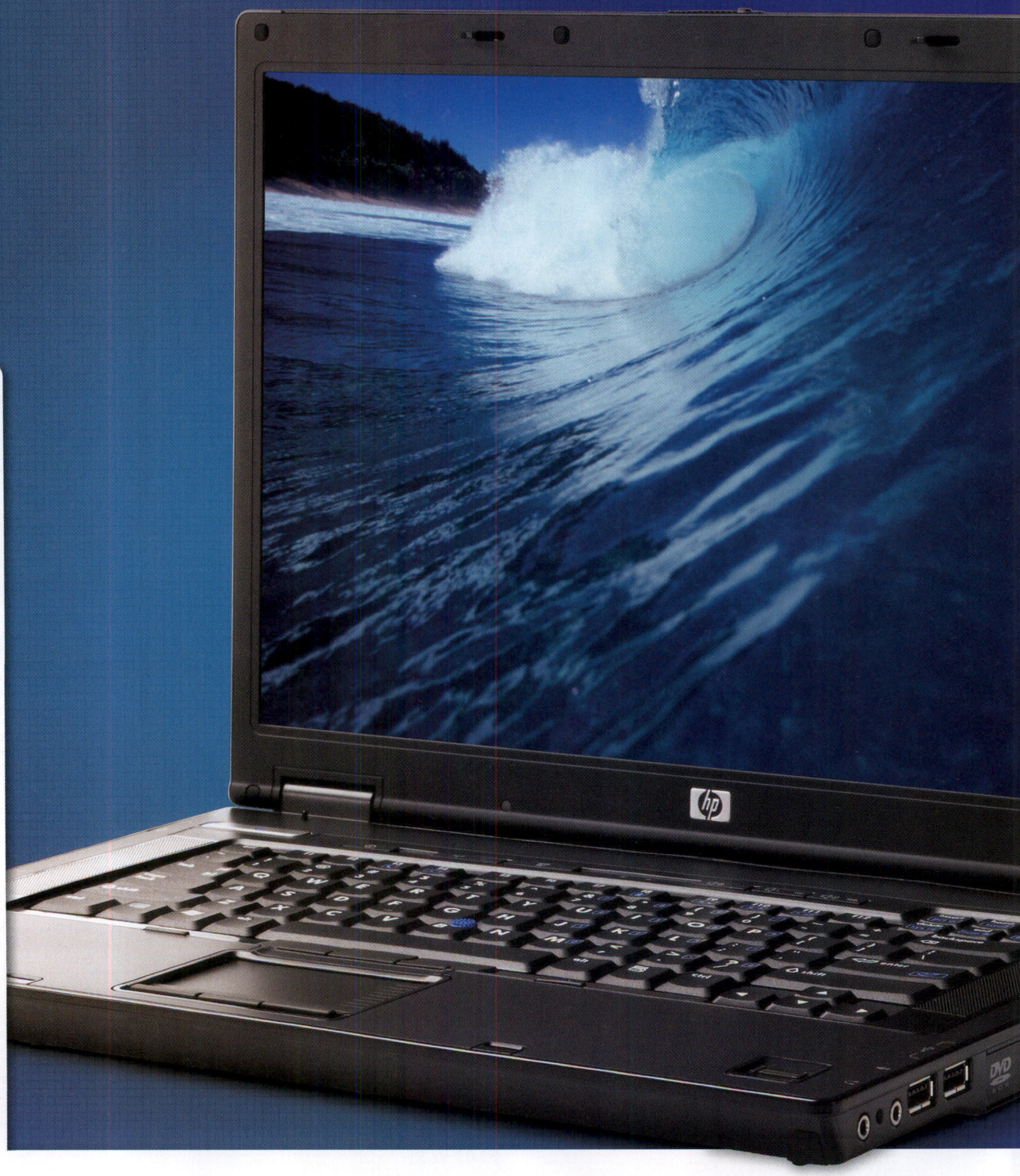
Encore CS3 can output HD-based projects in both SD (DVD) and HD forms (Blu-ray) formats, which is a useful timesaver. It can also output your work as a Flash file (SWF) or Flash Video (FLV) for use on the Web.

On Location is a new version of Serious Magic's DV Rack HD, a unique piece of software that offers a mobile studio for use in the field on a laptop. It's Windows-only, but it's still included in the Mac version of Creative Suite 3 Production Premium as it's easy to use on-set through Apple's Boot Camp technology.

The software has two core functions. It's a DDR (digital disc recorder), so that you can record DV or HDV video direct to your laptop's hard drive, and it also offers a series of monitors and scopes to check your video live in the field. On Location is also bundled with Premiere Pro CS3, if you buy that product separately.

Ultra is a very basic application for chroma keying and virtual set work. We'll reserve judgement until we see the full application, but at first glance it looks as reliant on cheesy stock graphics as Serious Magic's Visual Communicator.

Model: HP nw8440



HOW WE TESTED
These laptops were benchmarked using tests based on some the most popular cross-platform creative applications that you'd find in most creative studios. All tests were repeated three times and an average taken.

Adobe After Effects 7 Professional
This renders a five-second composition built of three uncompressed 1080i HD layers, each with filters and transforms. The render is run twice, once using GridIron's Nucleo 1.0.9 plug-in to take full advantage of multiple core processors – and once using AE's standard rendering engine. Results are in minutes and seconds and smaller bars are better.

Adobe Photoshop CS2/CS3 (beta)
This test performs 20 actions upon a 200MB image within Photoshop CS2 and in the CS3 beta. Results are in seconds and smaller bars are better.

Cinebench 9.5 – rendering
Cinebench is based on Maxon Cinema 4D and provides a processor-based benchmark by rendering a scene. Results are in Cinebench's proprietary units, and longer bars are better. The multiplier indicates how much faster the test runs using all available processors and cores compared to single processor/core.

Cinebench 9.5 – real-time 3D
Based on Maxon's Cinema 4D 9.5 software, Cinebench tests real-time 3D performance by moving a camera through a 3D scene. Results are in Cinebench's proprietary units, and longer bars are better. The multiplier indicates how much faster the scene runs compared to running the same test without using the 3D card to accelerate performance.

Battery life
Our battery life test simulates a standard creative workload. Results are in minutes, and longer bars are better

Screen colour gamut
This uses GretagMacbeth's Eye-One Display 2 spectrophotometer and Eye-One Match software to measure the range of colours that each laptops's screen can display.

LAPTOPS TESTED.
Apple MacBook Pro, Dell Precision M65, HP nw8440, Rock Pegasus 665, Sony Vaio VGN-FE41Z, Zoostorm 5-5005

Creativity on the road

A laptop lets you take your creativity wherever you go, and today's notebooks pack plenty of power. We road tested the latest models.

words Neil Bennett

With summer upon us, it's time to break away from your desk and get creative out of the office. A powerful, portable laptop will let you do all your normal work, wherever you want.

A 15-inch model will offer a good balance between power and portability. They have access to the fastest dual-core processors, oodles of memory and hard-disk space, and high-resolution displays – while still being slim and stylish.

15-inch laptops offer the widest choice of screen resolution – from the large print of 1,200-x-800 to the intricate detail of 1,920-x-1,200. Most screens have a widescreen aspect ratio, though Lenovo's T60 has a traditional 4:3 display. For us a resolution of 1,680-x-1,050 is the best option – lower resolutions make the palette-heavy interfaces of creative applications such as Photoshop, QuarkXPress, After Effects or Maya seem too cramped, while an HD resolution at 15-inches makes us squint. The best laptops give you a full choice of resolutions when you purchase.

Most screens have high-gloss coatings, which can have larger colour gamuts than traditional screens – though Apple gets points for offering a choice gloss and matte screens to suit your preference.

We recommend that Windows users stick with XP until their creative tools have been upgraded for Microsoft's new Vista OS. Adobe's Creative Suite 3 for print and Web pros ships soon, while video pros will get their CS3 in the autumn.

Mac users should soon see the release of Mac OS X 10.5, though again we'd recommend not upgrading until you're sure all of your tools are compatible.

All of the models we've looked at here feature one of the higher-end models from Intel's Core 2 Duo line of dual-core processors. Most creative applications have been able to take advantage of multi-core and multi-processor set-ups for many years, so are highly optimized for such chips. Most laptops featured here have the top-of-the-line 2.33GHz T7600 chip for maximum performance, though Sony's lower cost Vaio FE41Z has the slower 2GHz T7200. Even creatives on a budget should avoid the 1.66GHz T5500 and 1.83GHz T5600, as they also have half the cache of the faster chips. This lowers their performance further in intensive applications, which includes most creative tools.

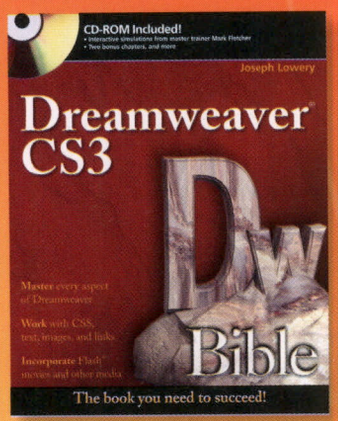
A 15-inch model will offer a good balance between power and portability, and they have access to the fastest dual-core processors, too

Intel says its next generation of laptop chips will be launched this autumn. The company is even planning to introduce a quad-core processor for laptops, though this will be for larger (17-inch or higher) desktop replacement or mobile workstations.

Artists working with 3D, whether in animation suites, After Effects, or in Photoshop CS3 will benefit from powerful graphics chips such as ATI's Mobility Radeon X2300 or nVidia's GeForce Go 7950 GTX – though 2D-based designers and illustrators will prefer more modest chips such as ATI's X1600 or nVidia's 7600. Using these save you money, and also use less battery power. Some laptops are also offered as mobile workstations, with tailored graphics chips from ATI's FireGL or nVidia's Quadro FX lines for high-end 3D suites.

Other features to seek out for the perfect laptop for the creative include 2GB or more of RAM to keep your applications ticking over smoothly, a large hard drive, a fast dual-layer DVD burner for backups, and media card slots if you do a lot of photography. An ergonomic design won't go amiss either.

Get Creative!



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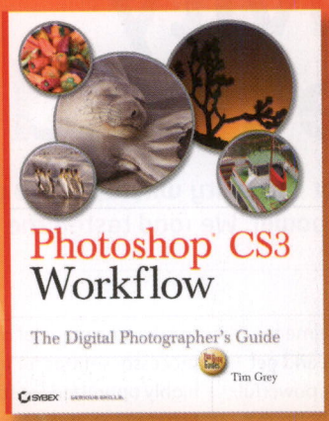

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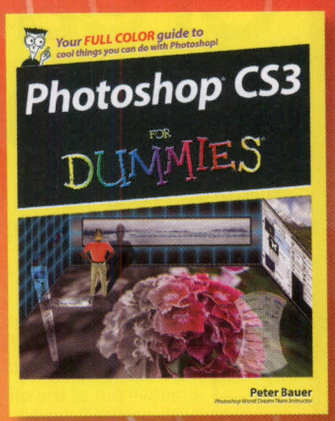

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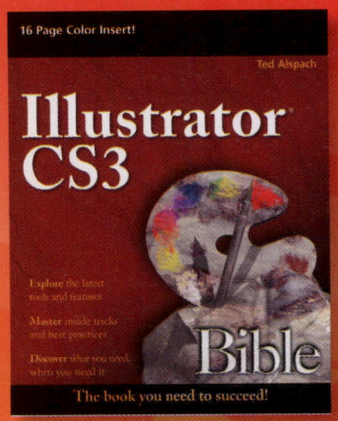

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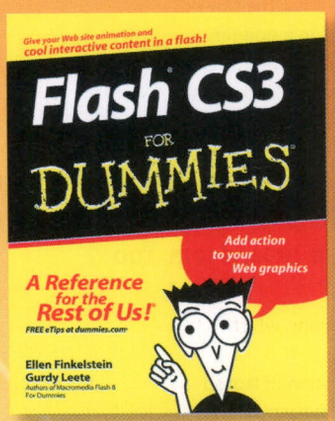
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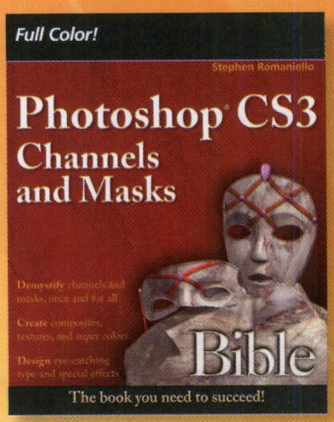

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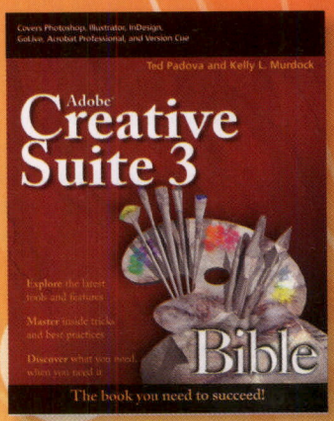
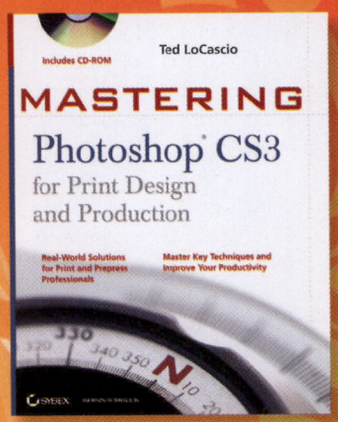


978-0-470-13067-4 • £28.99 • Oct-07



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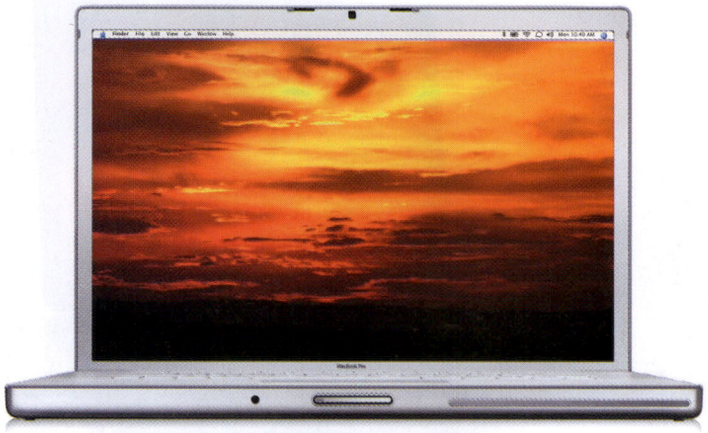


Apple MacBook Pro

DigitalArts Best Buy

Though aesthetically it's starting to feel a little dated, the MacBook Pro is still a triumph of industrial design. It's light enough that you don't really notice that it's in your bag and slim and small enough to use on EasyJet flights – but it's packed with the same powerful hardware as the other models we've looked at.

This Mac still has its idiosyncrasies, but its major performance flaw for creatives is its lack of native support for Adobe's Creative Suite software. This should be fixed with version 3 of the suite, which should have shipped by the time you read this.

CS3 represented the last major set of applications to be updated before Mac users could tap the power of Intel's chips – with most professional creatives using at least one of the tools on a regular basis (normally Photoshop). In our Cinebench and Photoshop CS3 beta tests, which are Intel-native, the MacBook Pro was one of the best performers – and we'd expect the same in After Effects CS3 (though that tool won't ship until late summer at the latest).

The mediocre real-time 3D performance, which looks artificially high due to the screen resolution, won't matter to most illustrators and designers – but there's no option of a more powerful chip.

The MacBook Pro is packed with innovations that have still not been bettered. These include a magnetic power lead connector to stop you kicking the laptop across the room if you trip over the lead, a backlit keyboard, super-fast 802.11n networking built-in, and gestural controls built into the trackpad. However, Apple's refusal to incorporate a right-click mouse button will irritate people used to Windows.

SCORE: ★★★★½

CONTACT DETAILS

- Apple, *www.apple.com/uk*
- Apple, *0800 783 4846*

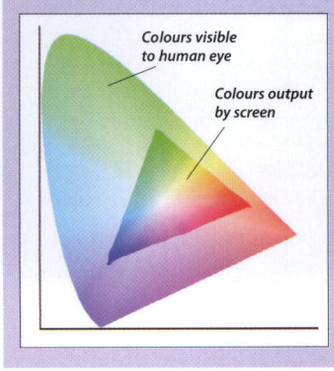
PRICE/INFO

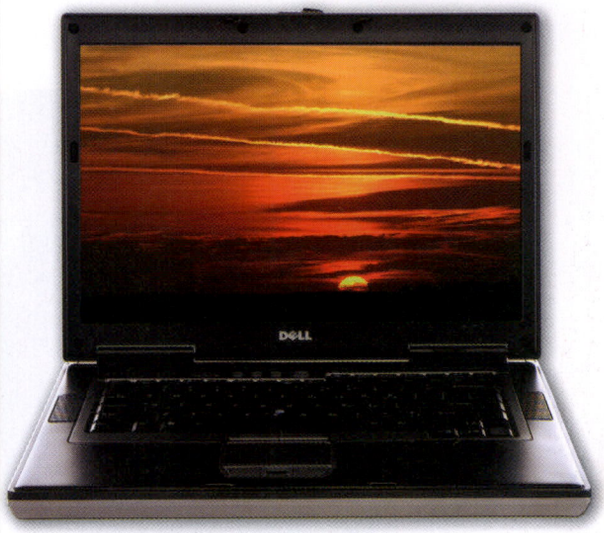
- format: Mac OS X 10.4
- price: £1,445.96 plus VAT

SUMMARY

- pros: Fast, light, and very powerful.
- cons: A few tools are not Intel native yet. No right-click button.

COLOUR GAMUT: MACBOOK PRO





Dell Precision M65

The Precision M65 is essentially Dell's Latitude D820 with nVidia's workstation class Quadro FX 350M graphics chip. If your applications don't require this type of chip, you can pick up this configuration with a non-3D workstation-class chip for about £100 less – though you may not want to, as its screen is too low-res for many creative pros.

At this M65's native resolution of 1,200-x-800, most major creative applications are so cramped that it slows your work. In After Effects, the Render Queue panel is almost unusable, and even Photoshop CS3's new collapsing interface gets in the way of your images. Dell offers the Precision M65 (and Latitude D820) with 1,680-x-1,050- or 1,920-x-1,200-resolution screens, which would be a massive improvement.

The M65's screen is driven by nVidia's least powerful graphics chip, the Quadro FX 350M, which shares some of the laptop's main RAM using nVidia's TurboCache technology. Its Cinebench score is weak, especially as it has fewer pixels to shunt around at the screen's low resolution.

Dell's laptop is the largest of the models we've looked at, but it's not the heaviest – Rock's Pegasus 665 has that privilege – and it's still perfectly portable. Its keyboard is the most comfortable to type on, though you may not want to have it on your lap, as its base gets quite hot after a while.

In our tests, the M65's performance was mediocre considering its top-spec components. It has the fastest Intel Core 2 Duo chip and 2GB of RAM but was slower than the other models with the same. The M65 was the fastest overall in the Photoshop CS3 beta – but only a second ahead of Apple's MacBook Pro.

SCORE: ★★★☆☆

CONTACT DETAILS

- Dell, *www.dell.co.uk*
- Dell, *0870 152 4699*

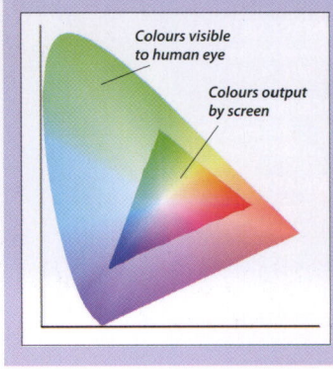
PRICE/INFO

- format: Windows XP Professional
- price: £1,598 plus VAT

SUMMARY

- pros: Top performer in Photoshop CS3.
- cons: Mediocre overall performance. Low-res screen. Poor graphics chip.

COLOUR GAMUT: PRECISION M65



HP nw8440

The nw8440's blocky design fitted perfectly with last summer's modernist fad, but it's aged badly and now just looks a bit ugly. Ergonomically, it's relatively thin and light – and comfortable to use even on your lap. We like its clear layout too – including the icons around the edge of the keyboard showing you where the ports are, so you can quickly plug in USB keys or your headphones without moving the nw8440 from your lap.

As with Dell's Precision M65, the nw8440 is a mobile workstation that's also available with a mainstream graphics chip for about £500 less – as the nc8420. Unlike the Dell model we looked at, the configuration of the nw8440 submitted by HP sits at the high-end of its options – possibly too high-end for many creatives. And it's very pricey indeed.

This nw8440's screen has a resolution of 1,920-x-1,200, which many people find hurts their eyes after long periods of use. However, you can buy this mobile workstation – and the nc8420 – with a 1,680-x-1,050-resolution screen if you wish.

Considering that the high-resolution screen reduces performance – especially in 3D applications – the nw8400 delivered some impressive results in our tests. Its real-time 3D score in Cinebench may not look as high as some rivals at first glance, but considering that this is outputting at HD resolution, it's a much better score than the similar score from Apple's MacBook Pro at 1,400-x-900.

This laptop's After Effects test time was also impressive, only just behind Rock's leader, and its Photoshop CS2 score was the fastest – though its Photoshop CS3 score was disappointing.

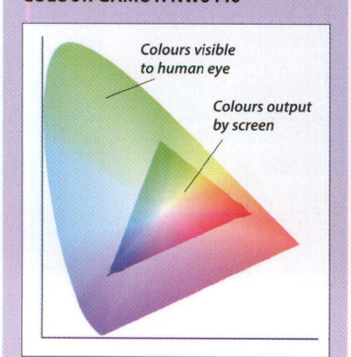
SCORE: ★★★★☆

CONTACT DETAILS
- HP, *www.hp.com/uk*
- HP, *0870 241 1485*

PRICE/INFO
- format: Windows XP Professional
- price: £2,419 plus VAT

SUMMARY
- pros: Impressive performance. Powerful graphics chip. Great ergonomics.
- cons: Ugly. Very expensive.

COLOUR GAMUT: NW8440



Rock Pegasus 665

With a design that's reminiscent of Sony's Vaio minus a few pounds, Rock's Pegasus 665 is slim enough to slip in a bag and run with. However, you may not get too far as it's the heaviest of the models we've looked at here by a few hundred grams – due to the longer-lasting nine-cell battery that Rock has provided with this model. With this installed, the Pegasus 665 lasted longer on battery alone than most of its rivals – though not as long as the Vaio.

In our tests, the Pegasus 665 was the fastest overall – though we'd put money on the MacBook Pro beating it when the full version of Creative Suite 3 ships, as the Mac was ahead in the native Cinebench rendering and Photoshop CS3 beta tests. This is despite the Pegasus 665 running Windows Vista, which none of our test applications officially support.

Vista played merry hell with our real-time 3D tests in Cinebench, throwing up obviously erroneous results. The included GeForce Go 7600 graphics chip usually provides solid if mediocre performance, but it won't run your battery down. The 665 has a glossy screen, but it didn't make as much of a difference to the colour gamut as the Vaio's.

The Pegasus 665 has a switch on the front to turn wireless networking on and off – helpfully saving battery power – but it lacks the innovative switch to turn the graphics chip on-&-off that its predecessor, the 650, had. This allowed you to rely on the built-in Intel graphics adaptor for even longer battery – albeit with very low 3D graphics power.

We were very impressed with the Pegasus 665 – though for the immediate future we'd recommend running Windows XP on it.

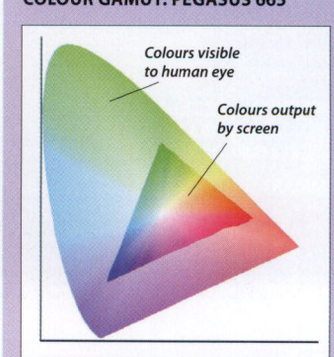
SCORE: ★★★★½

CONTACT DETAILS
- Rock, *www.rockdirect.com*
- Rock, *0845 688 0501*

PRICE/INFO
- format: Windows Vista Home Premium
- price: £1,204.43 plus VAT

SUMMARY
- pros: Fast. Slim. Gloss screen. Good battery.
- cons: Heavy. Vista causes some issues. Lack's predecessor's innovations.

COLOUR GAMUT: PEGASUS 665



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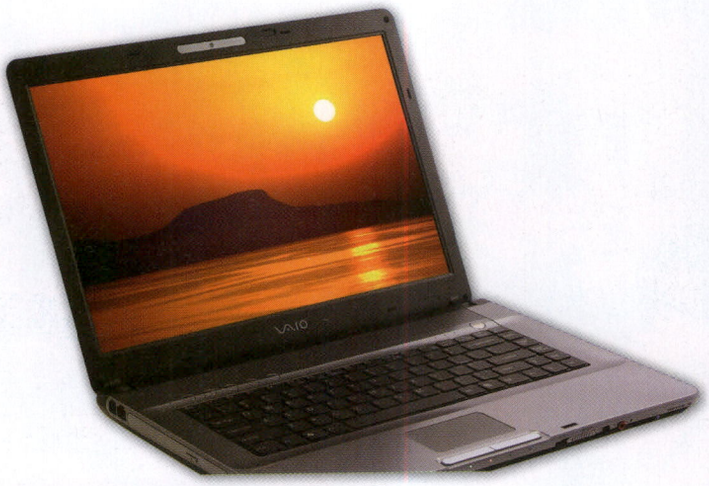


Sony Vaio VGN-FE41Z

Sony's Vaio FE41Z is the company's most powerful 15-inch laptop, but next to the competition it can look a little weak – the 2GHz Core 2 Duo T7200 is two notches behind the 2.33GHz T7600 used by all of the other models we've looked at here.

What's worse is that this is the top-rated configuration of the FE41, of which you have a choice of four. Next to the flexibility offered by most of the other vendors through configuration tools in their online stores, Sony's selection is paltry.

There's no reason why Sony couldn't put a T7600 into the FE41, which is a soundly designed laptop. It's relatively slim, light and attractive – and has the best screen of the bunch. Even at a casual glance, the X-black screen with two lamps is more vibrant and seems to have more depth than its rivals – and our tests with a spectrophotometer confirms this.

In our tests, the FE41Z was slower than the competition, which is unsurprising considering the slower processor. It was a definite last in most of our tests. Only the Mac was slower at rendering in After Effects (again due to non-native software).

The Cinebench real-time 3D test doesn't work properly under Windows Vista – another unchangeable option – so the FE41Z's score can be discounted. With a lowly GeForce Go 7600 graphic chip it was never going to score that high, though.

It's not just the processor that drags the scores down – the slow (4,200rpm) hard drive hinders it too.

What mitigates this somewhat is the price. The FE41Z is almost £100 less expensive than its nearest rival, Rock's Pegasus 665, and offers good value for money – but many creatives will want to pay (and get) a bit more.

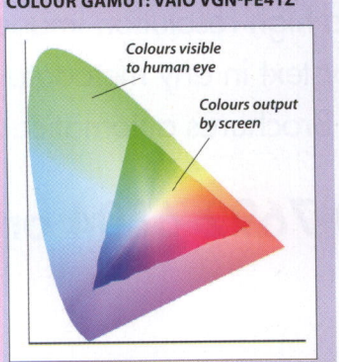
SCORE: ★★★½☆

CONTACT DETAILS
- Sony, *www.sony.co.uk*
- Sony, *08705 111 999*

PRICE/INFO
- format: Windows Vista Home Premium
- price: £1,105.53 plus VAT

SUMMARY
- pros: Low price. Good value. Great screen.
- cons: Slower processor than rivals. No higher-spec model available.

COLOUR GAMUT: VAIO VGN-FE41Z



Zoostorm 5-5005

Next to the other models we've looked at here, the 5-5005 looks like a right bargain. It's got the same top-of-the-line Intel Core 2 Duo T7600 processor and 2GB of RAM as the best of the bunch but is between half and two-thirds of the cost. But once you look beyond the specifications, it becomes clear why you have to pay more than £1,000 for a pro creative laptop.

In our tests, the 5-5005 performed well considering the price, but badly considering the components. Zoostorm's laptop was behind all of the other laptops with the T7600 chip in our After Effects, Cinebench rendering and Photoshop CS2 and CS3 tests. It was faster than the more expensive Vaio FE41Z, which was slowed by its less powerful T7200 processor.

The main reason for the 5-5005's unsuitability for creative pros is its screen. It's a gloss screen, but our tests showed that it has a smaller colour gamut than the matte screens of its rivals – and colours looked a little off to our eyes. The screen also has a low native resolution of 1,200-x-800, which makes using most major creative applications feel a little claustrophobic – and with palettes taking up most of the screen, there's little room for your work.

We were also unimpressed by the battery life, which was a lot less than the competition. Creative applications are demanding, and it's not much help if you can only run them for less than two hours without a charge.

Other reasons to disregard the 5-5005 include a hard drive that's quite noisy when it's booting or plugging away at a taxing creative task such as rendering or applying Photoshop filters, and a base that gets so hot you'd need ceramic legs to actually put it on your lap.

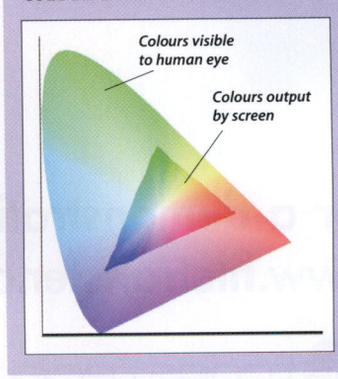
SCORE: ★★½☆☆

CONTACT DETAILS
- Zoostorm, *www.zoostorm.com*
- PC Next Day, *www.pcnextday.co.uk*

PRICE/INFO
- format: Windows Vista Home Premium
- price: £850 plus VAT

SUMMARY
- pros: Bargain price. Top-spec processor.
- cons: Low-res screen. Short battery life. Hot bottom, but not in the J-Lo sense.

COLOUR GAMUT: 5-5005



LAPTOP ROUNDUP

	DigitalArts Best Buy					
Model/Contact/Rating	**Apple MacBook Pro 15-inch** *www.apple.com/uk*	**Dell Precision M65** *www.dell.co.uk*	**HP nw8440** *www.hp.com/uk*	**Rock, Pegasus 665** *www.rockdirect.com*	**Sony, Vaio VGN-FE41Z** *www.sony.co.uk*	**Zoostorm, 5-5005** *www.zoostorm.com*
	★★★★½	★★★½☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★½☆	★★½☆☆
Price	**£1,445.96 plus VAT**	**£1,598 plus VAT**	**£2.419 plus VAT**	**£1.204.43 plus VAT**	**£1,105.53 plus VAT**	**£850 plus VAT**
OS	Mac OS X 10.4	Windows XP Professional	Windows XP Professional	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Premium
CPU	Core 2 Duo T7600 (2.33GHz)	Core 2 Duo T7600 (2.33GHz)	Core 2 Duo T7600 (2.33GHz)	Core 2 Duo T7600 (2.33GHz)	Core 2 Duo T7200 (2GHz)	Core 2 Duo T7600 (2.33GHz)
RAM (standard/max)	2GB/3GB	2GB/4GB	2GB/2GB	2GB/2GB	2GB/2GB	2GB/2GB
Front side bus	667MHz	667MHz	667MHz	667MHz	667MHz	667MHz
Screen	15.4-inch	15.4-inch	15.4-inch	15.4-inch	15.4-inch	15.4-inch
Aspect ratio	Widescreen	Widescreen	Widescreen	Widescreen	Widescreen	Widescreen
Coating	Matte (gloss optional)	Matte	Matte	Gloss	Gloss	Gloss
Resolution	1,400-x-900	1,280-x-800	1,920-x-1,200	1,680-x-1,050	1,280-x-800	1,280-x-800
Graphics card	ATI Mobility Radeon X1600	nVidia Quadro FX 350M	ATI FireGL Mobility V5200	nVidia GeForce Go 7600	NVidia GeForce Go 7600 GT	ATI Mobility Radeon X1600
Graphics RAM	256MB	256MB	512MB	256MB	256MB	256MB
Hard disk	120GB/5,400rpm	100GB/7,200rpm	100GB/7,200rpm	100GB/7,200rpm	200GB/4,200rpm	160MB/5,400rpm
Hard disk type	Serial ATA	Serial ATA	Serial ATA	Serial ATA	Serial ATA	Serial ATA
Optical drive	DVD±RW (dual layer)	DVD±RW (dual layer)	DVD±RW (dual layer)	DVD±RW (dual layer)	DVD±RW (dual layer)	DVD±RW (dual layer)
DVD write/DL write rewrite/DVD-RAM speed	6x/2.4x/4x	8x/6x/8x	8x/6x/8x/5x	8x/6x/8x/5x	8x/6x/8x/5x	8x/2.4x/4x/5x
Media card slots*	none	SD/MS	SD/MS	SD/MS/xD	MS (+ SD/xD through adapter)	SD/MS
Input device	Trackpad	Trackpad+pointer	Trackpad	Trackpad	Trackpad	Trackpad
Dimensions (W-x-D-x-H)	357-x-243-x-26mm	360-x-262-x-36mm	397-x-294-x-44mm	360-x-269-x-37mm	366-x-274-x-26mm	393-x-280-x-33mm
Weight including battery	2.5kg	2.8kg	2.7kg	3.1kg	2.8kg	3.0kg
Battery life	5 hours	not qouted	3 hours	tbc	3 hours	2.3 hours
Ethernet	Gigabit	Gigabit	Gigabit	Gigabit	Gigabit	10/100
Wireless connection	802.11b/g/n**, Bluetooth 2.0+EDR	802.11a/b/g, Bluetooth	802.11a/b/g	802.11a/b/g	802.11a/b/g, Bluetooth 2.0 +EDR	802.11a/b/g, Bluetooth 2.0 +EDR
Ports	2x USB 2.0, FireWire, FireWire 800, DVI, ExpressCard	4x USB 2.0, FireWire, VGA, S-Video, Serial, ExpressCard, PCMCIA, modem	4x USB 2.0, FireWire, DVI, S-Video, ExpressCard, modem	3x USB 2.0, FireWire, DVI, S-Video, ExpressCard, modem	3x USB 2.0, FireWire, HDMI, VGA, S-Video, ExpressCard, PCMCIA, modem	4x USB 2.0, FireWire, DVI, ExpressCard, modem, TV tuner

* SD - SD Card/MMC, MS - Memory Stick/Pro/Duo, xD - xD-Picture Card ** Using software update included with Apple's Airport Extreme Base Station

TEST	Apple MacBook Pro 15-inch	Dell Precision M65	HP nw8440	Rock Pegasus 665	Sony Vaio VGN-FE41E	Zoostorm 5-5005
Photoshop CS2	3mins 52s	3mins 21s	3mins 10s	3mins 32s	4mins 52s	3mins 35s
Photoshop CS3 (beta)	2mins 21s	2mins 20s	2mins 55s	3mins 1s	3mins 49s	3mins 54s
After Effects + Nucleo	18mins 22s	8mins 7s	7mins 37s	7mins 34s	9mins 18s	8mins 12s
After Effects	29mins 39s	13mins 8s	12mins 46s	12mins 12s	15mins 15s	13mins 33s
CB HW-L	4285 (9.08x)	3194 (7.08x)	4165 (9.31x)	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*
CB render	726 (1.88x)	689 (1.86x)	693 (1.82x)	708 (1.86x)	641 (1.82x)	685 (1.86x)
Battery	161mins	165mins	134mins	175mins	180mins	105mins

*Results erroneous due to lack of support for Windows Vista

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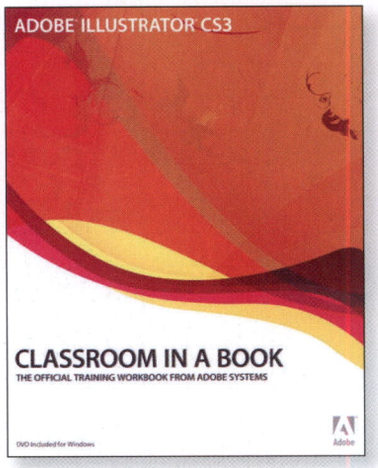
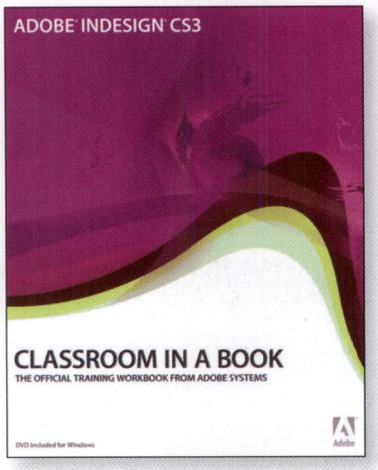
PEARSON Education



0321492005: 9780321492005: May



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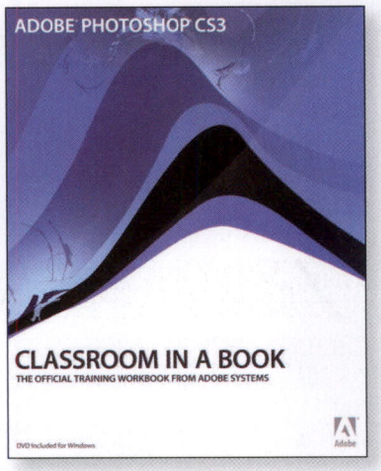

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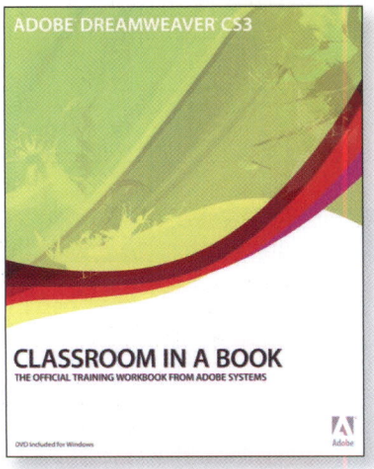

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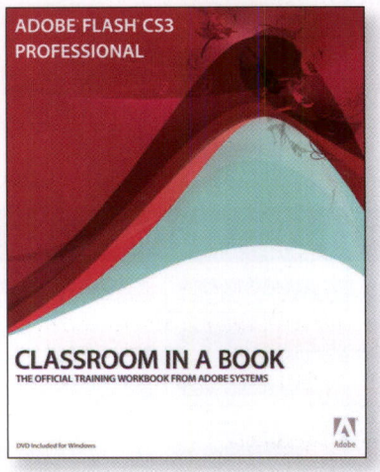
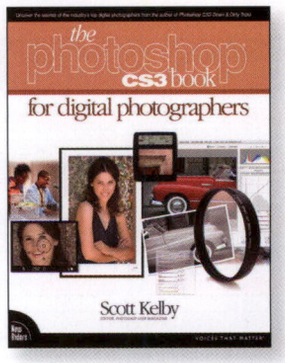


0321499824: 9780321499820: May

Scott Kelby:

The number 1 bestselling computer book author in the world



New Riders

0321499816
9780321499812
May

Available to pre-order now from amazon.co.uk™

Digital cameras

D40 | Nikon | www.nikon.co.uk | £469 | Feb 07 | ★★★★

This 6mp entry-level digital SLR offers a well-made body and will appeal more to those trading up from compacts

Pros: Well made, compact body with bright viewfinder. High picture quality with low noise on images

Cons: No built-in sensor cleaning or image stabilization system. Autofocus with AF-S or AF-I lenses only. RAW processing software is a £100 optional extra

D80 | Nikon | www.nikon.co.uk | £595 | Jan 07 | ½★★★★★

Follow-up to Nikon's successful 6mp D70 and D70s, the D80 is a great digital SLR that delivers price and performance

Pros: Great build quality, metering sensor, excellent image quality and innovative top LCD status display

Cons: No anti-shake or internal dust-busting system lets down what would be the complete, bargain package

Digital Arts Best Buy

EOS-400D | Canon | www.canon.co.uk | £595 | Jan 07 | ★★★★

Great-value entry-level digital SLR camera that features dust-busting technology and big 2.5-inch monitor

Pros: Value-packed solution, dust-defeating features, 9-point auto-focus system, good range of supplied software

Cons: Middle-of-the-road image performance and metering system can be fooled. Lacks spot metering and image stabilization

Exilim EX-S770 | Casio | www.casio.co.uk | £210 | Mar 07 | ½★★★

It looks the business with its racing-red casing, but lacks many of the manual controls you'll find on similar models

Pros: Images are good quality when using automatic settings, and for some its casing will prove alluring

Cons: Lack of manual control lowers its score, and small buttons don't help. Suffers from poor light sensitivity

Exilim Zoom EX-Z1050 | Casio | www.casio.co.uk | £195 | May 07 | ★★★★

A well-priced digital compact that delivers a whopping 10 megapixels wrapped in a stylish casing

Pros: Very-high resolution of 10mp, coupled with a low price. Access to core settings is quick, and manual settings versatile

Cons: Full resolution images suffer from a lack of detail, and it was mediocre in low-light conditions. Too easy to accidently switch on

FinePix S5 Pro | Fujifilm | www.fuji.co.uk | £850 | May 07 | ★★★★

Replacing the popular S3 Pro, this 12-megapixel digital SLR impresses with build quality, features, and image capture

Pros: Superb colour rendition profiles, excellent resolution, wider-than-average dynamic range and superb Nikon D200-based environmentally sealed body

Cons: Lacks any built-in automatic sensor cleaning. RAW processing software is an optional extra. No compressed RAW file option

PowerShot G7 | Canon | www.canon.co.uk | £382 | Jan 07 | ½★★★★★

Compact digital camera that delivers high-end performance with 10mp CCD and image-stabilization features

Pros: Optical image stabilizer works well, and the greater 6x zoom range is useful. Discrete and brisk in operation

Cons: Lens distortion is higher than you'd expect, and there is no RAW file capture option

Digital Arts Best Buy

Camcorders

AG-HVX200 | Panasonic | www.panasonic.co.uk | £2,999 | May 07 | ½★★★

On many levels this is a groundbreaking camera using DVCPRO HD and the P2 storage system, capturing a 1080-line signal

Pros: Huge range of recording options of interlaced and progressive, variable frame rate from 12fps to 50fps for pin-sharp slow-motion, 4:2:2 colour sampling

Cons: Novelty is a drawback, as limit of 8GB on its P2 storage option captures just 16 minutes of HD. Meagre editing support and too expensive

GY-HD201E | JVC Professional | www.jvcproeurope.com | £3,890 | May 07 | ★★★★

HD camera that sports three CCDs each with a native 1,280-x-720 pixels and support for a vast array of lenses, including 35mm film lenses

Pros: 1/3-inch bayonet mount for swapping lenses, good number of shooting modes from 24 to 60 frames per second, great colour capture

Cons: Not so good with poor illumination environments, very pricey, battery pack adds another £800 to the price

HV10 | Canon | www.canon.co.uk | £799 | Feb 07 | ★★★★

Palm-sized HD camcorder that records to MiniDV tapes using the HDV format and packs a massive 2.7-inch viewing screen

Pros: Vivid colour capture and a good set of manual controls, which are convenient to operate

Cons: Poor showing in low-light environments and lack of external microphone support let down an otherwise impressive package

HVR-A1E | Sony | www.sonybiz.co.uk | £1,389 | May 07 | ½★★★

Very light HD camera sporting a single CMOS sensor, with accessory shoe, pair of XLR inputs and quirky bottom-loading tape mechanism

Pros: Very light to carry around and use, solid value offering, video-peaking feature, punches above its weight in terms of image quality

Cons: Very poor performance in low-light conditions, bottom-loading tape, single CMOS can limit colour capture

HVR-V1E | Sony | www.sonybiz.co.uk | £2,475 | May 07 | ★★★★

Professional HD camera using a trio of 1/4-inch CMOS sensors and captures full-resolution 25p mode as well as 50i and HDMI output

Pros: Future-proof with HDMI support, Smooth Slow Record, and excellent fidelity in bright conditions

Cons: Low-light conditions result in poor performance, image-quality is reduced for slow-motion filming

XH A1 | Canon | www.canon.co.uk | £2,275 | May 07 | ½★★★★★

Canon's first general-purpose HD camera that uses HDV2 (1080i), using three 1.67-megapixel CCDs

Pros: An outstanding camera that performs well under all conditions, and great under low-light. Great value for feature set

Cons: Quite heavy at over 2kg, and the oddly placed LCD monitor is an ungenerous 2.8-inches

Digital Arts Best Buy

XH H1 | Canon | www.canon.co.uk | £4,499 | May 07 | ★★★★

The HD successor to Canon's XL2 using the HDV2 (1080i) format, plus great additions of HD-SDI genlock and timecode connectivity

Pros: HD-SDI genlock, interchangable XL optics, highly faithful colour capture and solid low-light performance, best video performance to date

Cons: Little uncomfortable to use, small 2.4-inch monitor, pricing could be a stumbling block for many

buyers guide

VISIT WWW.DIGITALARTSONLINE.CO.UK FOR ALL YOUR BUYING ADVICE

the last 6 months of Digital Arts reviews!

Digital Arts Buyer's guide

Digital Arts' mission is to review and rate professional creative tools. Each month, Digital Arts reviews more creative products than any other magazine in the UK, and Digital Arts reviews are the most respected in the industry.

The Digital Arts Buyer's Guide provides the most authoritative listing of reviewed products in the past six months, including ratings, contact details, and a product summary.

Pricing is correct at the time of the review and prices listed do not include VAT. Please note that pricing does change - you should contact your distributor for pricing information before purchasing.

Digital Arts ratings

★★★★★ *The best product in its class*

½★★★★★ *Fantastic package - almost perfect*

★★★★ *Highly recommended*

½★★★★ *Above average with some flaws*

★★★ *Average*

½★★★ *Below par with serious limitations*

★★ *Fundamentally flawed*

½★ *Lacks any redeeming features*

★ *Avoid*

Laptops

HP nx9420 ★★★★★

£1,149 www.hp.com/uk

Dull design hides a corking 17-inch creative laptop that performs brilliantly Digital Arts Best Buy

MacBook Pro 17-inch Apple, www.apple.com/uk	Mar 07	★★★★	£1,616
Vaio VGN-AR21S Sony, www.sony.co.uk	Mar 07	★★★★	£1,707
Voyager C720DC Plus Evesham, www.evesham.com	Mar 07	★★★★	£1,446
XPS M1710 Dell, www.dell.co.uk	Mar 07	★★★	£1,399
Xtreme CTX Pro Rock, www.rockdirect.com	Mar 07	★★★★★ Digital Arts Best Buy	£1,963

Graphic cards

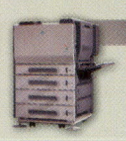
FireGL V3400 ★★★★★

£199 www.ati.com

Excellent value for money and a strong performer for much 3D work Digital Arts Best Buy

FireGL V7350 ATI, www.ati.com	Oct 06	★★★★	£1,175
FireGL V5200 ATI, www.ati.com	Oct 06	★★★★	£399
NX950GX2 MSI, www.msicomputer.co.uk	Oct 06	★★★★	£305
Radeon X1900 XTX Sapphire, www.sapphiretech.com	Oct 06	★★★	£225
Quadro FX 1500 PNY Technologies, www.pny.com	Oct 06	★★★★	£399.99

Printers



Magicolor 7450 ★★★★★

£2,038 konicaminolta.co.uk

Considering the base price, this is an A3 colour laser that offers everything Digital Arts Best Buy

AcuLaser C9100n Epson, www.epson.co.uk	Feb 07	★★★	£1,671
Aficio SP C411dn Ricoh, www.ricoh.co.uk	Feb 07	★★★★	£1,845
DesignJet Z3100 HP, www.hp.com/uk	May 07	★★★★	£3,280
Phaser 7760 Xerox, www.xerox.co.uk	Feb 07	★★★★	£4,969
Stylus Pro 3800 Epson, www.epson.co.uk	Feb 07	★★★★	£995

Peripherals

NuLooq ★★★★★

£79 www.logitech.co.uk

Unique input solution, it consists of a number of dials and faster working method Digital Arts Best Buy

500GB eSATA drive Seagate, www.seagate.co.uk	Jan 07	★★★★	£195
Velocity² CMS Products, www.cmsproducts.com	Apr 07	★★★★	£370
dvd940i HP, www.hp.com/uk	Feb 07	★★★★	£33
Perfection V750 Pro Epson, www.epson.co.uk	Sep 06	★★★★★	£465
Scanjet G4050 HP, www.hp.com/uk	Mar 07	★★★★ Digital Arts Best Buy	£169

Workstations

3XS H20 DCC Scan www.scan.co.uk £1,577 Dec 06 ★★★★

An unusual-looking workstation hides an Intel Core 2 Duo processor clocked at 2.4GHz and a large amount of water cooling pipework

Pros: The quietest workstation we've ever tested thanks to a giant heat sink, radiators and watercooling pipes

Cons: Cooling system takes up internal space, performance was middle-of-the-road, cooling system adds to cost

Acumen Core Evesham www.evesham.co.uk £1,593 Dec 06 ★★★★

Resembling a black Mac Pro but with the quirky addition of wheels, this graphics workstation packs 2GB of RAM and Intel Core 2 Duo

Pros: Wheels are handy for in-studio roaming, Photoshop speeds are very capable, two 250GB hard drives in RAID array, easy access to internals

Cons: More suited to video pros, acceptable performance for its included RAM, entry-level FireGL card slightly lets it down

Mac Pro Apple www.apple.com/uk £1,446 Dec 06 ★★★★

Completing Apple's move to Intel, the Mac Pro is an incredibly powerful machine compared to its rivals, and excellent value for money

Pros: Sports two physical Xeon processors, very powerful workstation for its price, low noise output, plenty of internal space

Cons: Single 250MB hard drive is small, no eSATA connection, needs Intel-native software to be pushed fully

Magnetar QS Armari www.armari.co.uk £1,599 Dec 06 ★★★★★

Graphics workstation that offers an Intel Core 2 Quad Extreme QX6700 processor, delivering staggering performance

Pros: Extreme version of the Core 2 Quad with 8MB level 2 cache, blistering speed, very impressive Photoshop-editing speeds

Cons: 3D performance was a little sluggish, needed some fiddling to access the full 4GB of RAM in Photoshop

Digital Arts Best Buy

Magnetar QX Armari www.armari.co.uk £4,595 Jan 07 ★★★★

The first workstation we've seen to include Intel's quad-core Xeon processor. It adds a 50 per cent performance hike, but costs a bomb

Pros: Very fast – a 30-50 per cent speed hike depending on application over models with one quad-core or two dual-core processors

Cons: Very noisy in operation, and massive case. It costs a huge amount

X8i-C2D Xworks www.xworksinteractive.com £1,550 Dec 06 ★★★★

Built from powerful components, the X8i-C2D is one of the best dual-core workstations around. Offers 4GB of RAM and dual hard drives

Pros: Excellent Photoshop performance thanks to dual hard drives, and included ATI FireGL V5200 sees it turn in a great 3D performance

Cons: Dull looking case, slightly noisy drives and confused internal layout

xw6400 HP www.hp.com/uk £2,041 Feb 07 ★★★★

HP's first quad-core workstation is otherwise modestly specced. The price is more reasonable than other souped-up quad-cores, though

Pros: Small profile and a quiet design. Good set of bundled entry-level accessories

Cons: Processor was surprisingly sluggish, and hampered by a smaller number of drive bays

Monitors

20-inch Cinema Display Apple www.apple.com/uk £450 Apr 07 ★★★★

On looks alone, Apple monitors are still the best. This 20-inch LCD is a solid performer, but you pay a premium for its looks

Pros: Looks stunning, controls built into Mac OS X, built-in profiling on a Mac, calibrated output is great

Cons: Windows users will be left cold through lack of control, output not as good as the Dell UltraSharp 2007FP

320 Monitor LaCie www.lacie.co.uk £833 Apr 07 ★★★★

A 20-inch, 4:3 aspect ratio LCD display with a reliable and very sharp picture. After calibration, it's almost perfect for print designers

Pros: Great design featuring smooth positioning and tilt, features a light-blocking hood, incredibly sharp picture, and excellent colour after calibration

Cons: Can't hang a calibrator on it without removing the hood, calibration only works with LaCie's device, limited menu controls on monitor

CE210W Eizo www.eizo.co.uk £682 Apr 07 ★★★★★

Offers the best balance between performance and price of any LCD that we've seen. The 21-inch display is flawless

Pros: Great display before calibration, astonishing after calibration. Massive brightness rating suited to video work

Cons: The only real disappointment is the lack of a hood

Digital Arts Best Buy

FP91R BenQ www.benq.co.uk £799 Apr 07 ★★★

This 19-inch LCD offers some good innovations – such as an easily adjusted stand – but it's too pricey and too small for creative users

Pros: Ships with a calibrator as standard, excellent and accurate display output, flexible positioning options

Cons: Screen size and resolution – 1,280-x-1,024 – might leave designers squinting, price is too high for the screen real estate offered

UltraSharp 2007FP Dell www.dell.co.uk £319 Apr 07 ★★★★

A fantastic option for the creative on a budget, this 20-inch LCD delivers high colour fidelity and range, plus widescreen format

Pros: Excellent budget option that doesn't skimp on quality, high colour fidelity, perfect ergonomics, great for dual-screen set-ups

Cons: Menu controls are basic (we had to use the hidden service menu), output not up to more expensive monitors

SpectraView 2190 NEC nec-display-systems.co.uk £1,099 Apr 07 ★★★★

This 21.3-inch LCD monitor is expensive, but offers exceptional picture quality and an excellent colour-calibration system

Pros: Premium-quality output that outshines most other solutions, innovative profiling matches the monitor to your graphics card

Cons: Unless £250 for an extra screen inch over the LaCie 320 monitor is worth it, this is too expensive for what it offers

VX2245wm ViewSonic viewsoniceurope.com/uk £272 Apr 07 ★★

The VX2245wm is a lousy 22-inch LCD monitor with an iPod dock tagged on. The colour gamut is small and the picture not suitable

Pros: Depending on taste, the iPod dock is useful, larger screen than average, and an ultra-fast response rate of 4ms is good for video

Cons: Looks tacky, colour gamut is restictive, poor audio quality from the built-in speakers, very oversaturated picture

3D and animation

3DS Max 9 — Autodesk — www.autodesk.com — £2,695 — Jan 07 — ★★★★★

The first 64-bit release of the high-end 3D modelling and animation studio delivers formidable performance

Pros: At the high-end of 3D, version 9 offers some great new technology and performance enhancements

Cons: Can be less flexible than competing systems, and it's also fairly expensive

Digital Arts Best Buy

Maya 8.5 — Autodesk — www.autodesk.co.uk — £1,449 — Apr 07 — ★★★★★

Adding native compatability for Intel-based Macs, Maya 8.5 emerges as an excellent solution with new simulation tools

Pros: Nucleus unified simulation framework and nCloth module. Intel Mac support. Python scripting. Extensive new Mental Ray shaders

Cons: Nucleus and nCloth only in the more expensive Unlimited version. Advanced simulations demand powerful workstations

Digital Arts Best Buy

Mudbox 1.0 — Skymatter — www.mudbox3d.com — $649 — Feb 07 — ★★★★

Boasting a straightforward 3D modelling workflow, Mudbox is a powerful tool for 3D studios, but it might be too costly for casual artists

Pros: Straightforward, pared-down sculpting workflow. Fast, symmetrical sculpting. Normal and displacement map creation. Layer support

Cons: Documentation is online only. Limited file import support. Limited creation tools, and a basic material editor

Poser 7 — E frontier — www.e-frontier.com — £111 — Apr 07 — ★★★★

Poser has come a long way in recent years, and version 7 of the character animation toolset now offers custom morph creation

Pros: Custom morph target creation. New talk designer. Animation layers and universal poses. New figures and poses, plus HDRI support for IBL

Cons: Some doubts over reliability. Main competition is freeware. High-end Mac or Windows PC with OpenGL required for best performance

Softimage|XSI 6 — Softimage — www.softimage.com — £299 — Mar 07 — ★★★★

Version 6 of this 3D suite offers new character-animation tools, a Material Manager, and new non-native file support

Pros: New character-animation tools including MOTOR motio-data importing and retargeting. Material Manager with Shaderball display

Cons: Majority of new features aimed at studio pipelines. More expensive Essentials and Advanced versions have most new features

Storyboard Artist 4 — PowerProduction — www.storyboardartist.com — £479 — Apr 07 — ★★★

A useful previsualization tool with extensive output options and a large content library, though the interface is challenging

Pros: Extensive output support. Timeline sound sync and editing. Multiple data fields/caption windows. PSD layer, batch, and alpha channel support

Cons: Cluttered, busy interface. Included guide is fairly basic. Expensive

Vue 6 Infinite — E-on Software — www.e-onsoftware.com — £406 — May 07 — ★★★★

Featuring a completely overhauled interface design, its EcoSystem feature allows for rapid population of 3D landscapes

Pros: EcoSystem Gen II technology for painting instances onto objects. Spectral Engine and Metaclouds. Layered EcoSystems. Good intergration with other tools

Cons: Expensive compared to the competition. xStream not available for Mac OS X or Softimage|XSI. Complex workflow, but basic reference manual

Photoshop plug-ins

55mm 7.0 — Digital Arts Best Buy — ★★★★★

digitalfilmtools.com — Mar 07 — $245

Recreates accurate replications of real-world film techniques for Photoshop

Blow Up — ★★★★

alienskin.com — Mar 07 — £109

Top image-scaling plug-in that offers the best results up to 3,600 per cent

Decorator — Digital Arts Best Buy — ★★★★★

akvis.com — Mar 07 — $54

Allows you to change the surface of an object in a realistic manner. Great output

Digitalizer — ★★★★

panopticum.com — Mar 07 — $25

One trick plug-in for creating a matrix image in Photoshop with text overlay

ImageSynth — Digital Arts Best Buy — ★★★★★

luxology.com — Mar 07 — $99

Creates a seamless texture from a single image with stunning results

Mask Pro 4 — ★★★★

ononesoftware.com — Mar 07 — $160

A masking plug-in that lets you define colours to mask off and keep

Mystical Bundle — ★★★★

autofx.com — Mar 07 — $299

Includes Mystical Lighting and Tint, Tone, and Color plug-ins. Excellent output

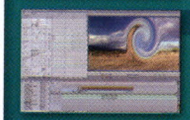
Video effects plug-ins

Conduit 1.5 — dvGarage — www.dvgarage.com — $149 — Feb 07 — ★★★★

Aimed at filling the gap between Motion and Shake, Conduit offers a collection of keying and complex colour tools for Final Cut Pro

Pros: Good fit with the Final Cut Pro workflow. Nodal compositing. Ideal for greenscreen work. Pulls difficult keys with ease and gives clean results

Cons: Slightly limited number of media inputs. Complex effects can slow down the package, and it can be complex to use



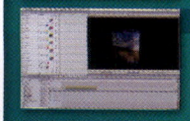
Continuum Complete 4 — Boris FX — www.borisfx.com — £445 — Feb 07 — ★★★★★

Offers 140 transitions and filters for Apple Final Cut Pro, Adobe Premiere Pro, Xpress Pro and Avid systems

Pros: Quality of the effects is very high. Integrated solution that is easy to learn. Massive array of controls for each effect. Motion tracker

Cons: Level of effects isn't quite as high as GenArts Sapphire, but that's being picky. Colour correction tools slightly redundant

Digital Arts Best Buy



Entire-Bundle — CHV-Electronics — www.chv-plugins.com — $299 — Feb 07 — ★★★★

Includes three sets of plug-ins for Apple Final Cut Pro 5, predominantly covering motion-graphic effects and morphing

Pros: Great 3D effects that produce solid results. Tower of Film plug-in does exactly what it says on the tin. Useful, if niche, collection

Cons: Warp and morph tools can't keyframe grid positions. Some issues when working with HD footage. Too niche for a general purchase

FxFactory Pro — Noise Industries — www.noiseindustries.com — $199 — Feb 07 — ★★★★

FxFactory Pro is a new set of filter effects for Final Cut Pro that delivers 46 effects ranging from blurs and distortions to cartoon effects

Pros: Decent array of plug-ins that boost compositing. Can be used across Motion and Final Cut, and works with your graphics card. Output quality is high

Cons: Lacks a level of control found in more mature collections, but that is to be expected. Online store has few extra plug-ins to date

Knoll Light Factory 2.5 — Red Giant — www.redgiantsoftware.com — $199 — Feb 07 — ★★★★

A lens-flare plug-in for Final Cut Pro, Premiere Pro, and Xpress Pro. Delivers a comprehensive set of controls for lens flare effects

Pros: If you want to use lens flare effects, Knoll Light Factory is the best solution. Taps the power of your graphics card to produce excellent results

Cons: Interface feels dated and jars when used inside the likes of Final Cut Pro. Can be difficult to use, and simple to create over-used cheesy effects

Magic Bullet Colorista — Red Giant — www.redgiantsoftware.com — $199 — Apr 07 — ★★★★

Colour-correction and colour-matching plug-in for Final Cut Pro, After Effects, Premiere Pro, and Avid systems

Pros: Fast and high-grade colour tools. Swift masking controls. High-quality output

Cons: Final Cut Pro's colour-correction tools are already pretty good, so might have limited use on that system

PlasmaFX — Digital Anarchy — www.digitalanarchy.com — $129 — Apr 07 — ★★★

This inexpensive video-effects plug-in runs in near real-time, and works only in Final Cut Pro and Motion, and sports 26 effects

Pros: Runs very quickly with SD footage, and taps into the Mac OS X Core Image feature. Output is acceptable

Cons: Mac-only solution. Unoriginal choice of filters mean you've seen – and used them – via other packages

Video software

After Effects 7 — Digital Arts Best Buy — ★★★★★

adobe.co.uk — Oct 06 — £565

Still the best overall animation and compositing suite for your money

Combustion 4 — ★★★★

autodesk.co.uk — Oct 06 — £850

The best visual-effects package for under a grand – but few new additions to v4

Final Cut Pro 5 — Digital Arts Best Buy — ★★★★★

apple.com/uk — Jul 05 — £595

The top video-editing tool for the desktop, and just keeps getting better

Premiere Pro CS2 — ★★★★

adobe.co.uk — May 06 — £705

Offers Clip Notes, DVD authoring, HDV import, and multi-cam editing

RT.X2 — Digital Arts Best Buy — ★★★★★

matrox.com — Jul 06 — £1,174

HDV capture and acceleration card that boosts HDV editing performance

Shake 4.1 — ★★★

apple.com/uk — Oct 06 — £280

Despite new low price, unsuitable for most desktop-based video work

Vegas+DVD — ★★★★

sonymediasoftware.com — Dec 06 — $299

Worthy video solution that offers some innovative features and toolsets

Web

Dreamweaver 8

£339 www.adobe.co.uk

Major upgrade for the Web-design program with new CSS support and more

Digital Arts Best Buy

Expression Web Microsoft, www.microsoft.co.uk	Mar 07	★★★★	£221
Flash 8 Professional Adobe, www.adobe.co.uk	Oct 05	★★★★	£499
Fireworks 8 Adobe, www.adobe.co.uk	Oct 05	★★★★★ Digital Arts best buy	£249
GoLive CS2 Adobe, www.adobe.co.uk	Oct 05	★★★★	£335

WEB DESIGN SPOTLIGHT

Attik reinvented the car Web site (see issue May 07) with the launch of want2Bsquare.org. This site, created for the car brand Scion, consisted of six starkly different worlds that featured a wealth of interactive games and community. The team behind the site used a combination of Adobe Illustrator, Flash and Shockwave 3D to generate the designs.

One of the most impressive worlds was The Square, an isometric 3D world that used 3D blocks to build a Web-navigated landscape. The colour-scheme is heavy on bright, saturated colours.

DTP

InDesign CS2

www.adobe.co.uk

Sep 06

£609

Digital Arts Best Buy

Leading desktop-design package that delivers great type control, special effects, layers, and excellent PDF output

Pros: Type engine is excellent, PDF support is top-notch, drop shadow and blending modes, integration with other Adobe software

Cons: Interface and navigation can be daunting, especially for switchers from QuarkXPress. Effects-heavy PDFs can be problematic

InDesign still edges ahead of the competition thanks to its superior creative tools, and integration with other key applications, such as Photoshop ★★★★★

Acrobat 8 Professional Adobe, www.adobe.co.uk	Jan 07	★★★★	£395
PrintDevizor 2 StoneCube, stonecube.co.uk	Jul 06	★★★★★	£195
QuarkXPress 7 Quark, www.quark.co.uk	Jul 06	★★★★	£749
QX-Tools Pro 7 OnOne Software, www.ononesoftware.com	Mar 07	★★★★	$99.95
Quark Print Collection Quark, www.quark.co.uk	Feb 07	★★★★	£199

Interactive

EasyPano Studio 2005	EasyPano	www.easypano.com	£735	Dec 06	★★★★★

Incorporates stitching program PanoWeaver 4 and tour-authoring software TourWeaver to offer a comprehensive tool

Pros: Fisheye-stitching application that offers great functionality. Decent price for output. Handles two- to six-shot originals

Cons: Expensive considering it can't stitch conventional lenses, only fisheye ones

Digital Arts Best Buy

ImageAssembler Pro	PanaVue	www.panavue.com	$129	Dec 06	★★★★

This low-cost stitching panorama application doesn't include virtual-tour tools, but it does offer a decent array of stitching tools

Pros: Good application for newcomers to panoramic stitching. Supports multi-layer PSD output and 16-bit colour with ICC profiles. Lens definitions work well

Cons: Doesn't work with fisheye lenses. Lacks advanced correction tools, and there is no tour functionality. A bit low-end for serious users

PictoStitch Pro 1.0	PictoSphere	www.pictosphere.com	$499	Dec 06	★★★

This panoramic stitcher is a bit basic and fiddly to set up, but uses fisheye lenses, and offers plenty of manual control when stitching

Pros: Assembles images with a live preview. Compatible with both circular and full-frame images. Plenty of controls for stitching and colour control

Cons: Difficult and fiddly to use. Sliders can be daunting. Limited output options, so you'll need third-party tools to effectively use the stitched result

Tourweaver 2.0	EasyPano	www.easypano.com	$199	May 07	★★★★

Virtual tour authoring application that takes panoramic scenes and adds hotspots, dynamic text areas and large image files

Pros: New tools for navigation buttons and controls. Full-screen option. High-resolution output and an improved user interface

Cons: Professional version is more expensive than the competition. We experienced some full-screen applet playing problems on a Mac

Virtual Tour Business Kit	360 DOF	www.360dof.com	$695	Dec 06	★★★★

A versatile and affordable suite that covers each stage of the virtual tour authoring process. Outputs to Java and QuickTime movie formats

Pros: Very flexible and comprehensive set of controls, and the output is high quality. Interface appealed, and included plenty of special effects

Cons: Similar features to some other, less expensive solutions prevented it from getting a top score

Virtual Tour Studio	RealViz	www.realviz.com	€790	Dec 06	★★★★★

Bundles RealViz's Stitcher 5.5 Unlimited and VTour for a complete panorama and virtual-tour creation workflow

Pros: Excellent value for money with a comprehensive toolset and great output. Correction tools are of particular note

Cons: Fisheye stitching can be tempermental, while VTour is fiddly to use in some areas. Workflow is unusual

Digital Arts Best Buy

Quark Interactive Designer	Quark	www.euro.quark.com	£69	Jan 07	★★★★

QuarkXPress plug-in that offers easy-to-use Flash authoring integrated in the DTP workflow, and aimed at graphic designers

Pros: Easy-to-use environment that QuarkXPress users will feel at home in. Lets you create cross-media print, Web and Flash projects with shared resources

Cons: Cannot import or modify existing projects or SWF files from other applications. URL linking proved tempermental on our installation

Design and imaging

Aperture 1.5	Apple	www.apple.com/uk	£185	Apr 07	★★★★

Revamped version of the Mac OS X software for handling digital RAW files. Early niggles have largely been fixed, and sports a great interface

Pros: Brings some innovations to digital RAW handling. Excellent Light Table mode and loupe tool. Stack feature for quick and easy image sorting

Cons: List of camera support isn't as extensive as Adobe Photoshop Lightroom. Needs masses of RAM and processor speed

Bibble 4.9 Pro	Bibble Labs	www.bibblelabs.com	$130	Apr 07	★★★★★

Full-featured digital RAW handler and converter that delivers many of the features found on more expensive solutions

Pros: Bargain price belies an incredible array of features. Regular updates for new cameras. Automatic imaging cleaning tools dazzle

Cons: Tabbed interface a little dull – but that is being extremely picky. Hard to fault.

Digital Arts Best Buy

Capture NX	Nikon	www.nikon.co.uk	£101	Apr 07	★★★★

This RAW converter and photo-editing workflow tool only works with Nikon's own NEF RAW format, limiting its appeal

Pros: Inexpensive solution for handling RAW files if you use Nikon cameras. No-destructive processing. Masking tools for editing. Distortion removal tools

Cons: Appeal is limited to Nikon users. Interface isn't as streamlined as offerings from Adobe and Apple

Capture One Pro 3.7	Phase One	www.phaseone.com	£340	Apr 07	★★★★

Long-time photographers' favourite, this is a digital RAW file converter that delivers a high-quality suite of image-processing tools

Pros: Quality of image output makes it a firm favourite. Can create custom camera profiles and edit IPTC captions. Logical operation, and good manual controls

Cons: Quite expensive and while the output is great, it is similar to other solutions at high enlargements

DxO Optics Pro 4.1	DxO Labs	www.dxo.com	$149	Apr 07	★★★

DxO Optics Pro is a RAW converter with a difference: not only does it handle colour and density corrections, it compensates for lens distortion

Pros: Lens distortion correction feature is a unique and useful addition. RAW processing quality is generally good and there's a good range of enhancements

Cons: Very slow in use and loading up images. Hard to select single images. Painfully slow export times

Painter X	Corel	www.corel.co.uk	£205	Apr 07	★★★★

A solid upgrade to Corel's natural-media painting tool. RealBristle functionality offers a new level of realism, and composition aids shine

Pros: RealBristle functionality adds a new level of control. Handy new composition tools

Cons: Autopainting tools promise more than they deliver. Interface might prove complex for newcomers

Photoshop Lightroom 1.0	Adobe	www.adobe.co.uk	£125	Apr 07	★★★★★

A brilliant photography-workflow tool, offering an attractive interface, with a wide-range of camera import profiles

Pros: Multi-stage workflow works well. Key metadata browser. Wide range of camera profiles. Tight integration with Photoshop

Cons: Not quite as innovative as Aperture, but doesn't suffer for it

Digital Arts Best Buy

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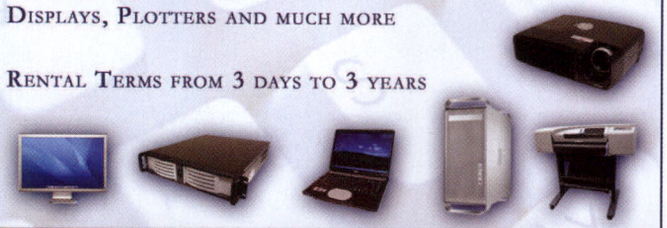

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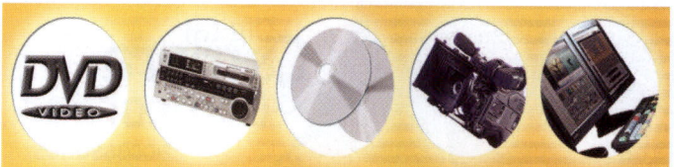

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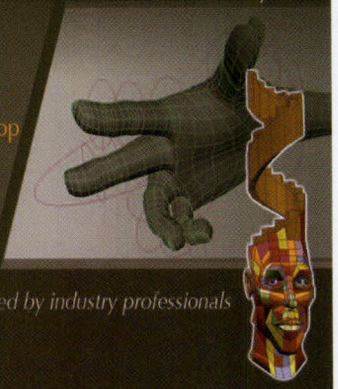

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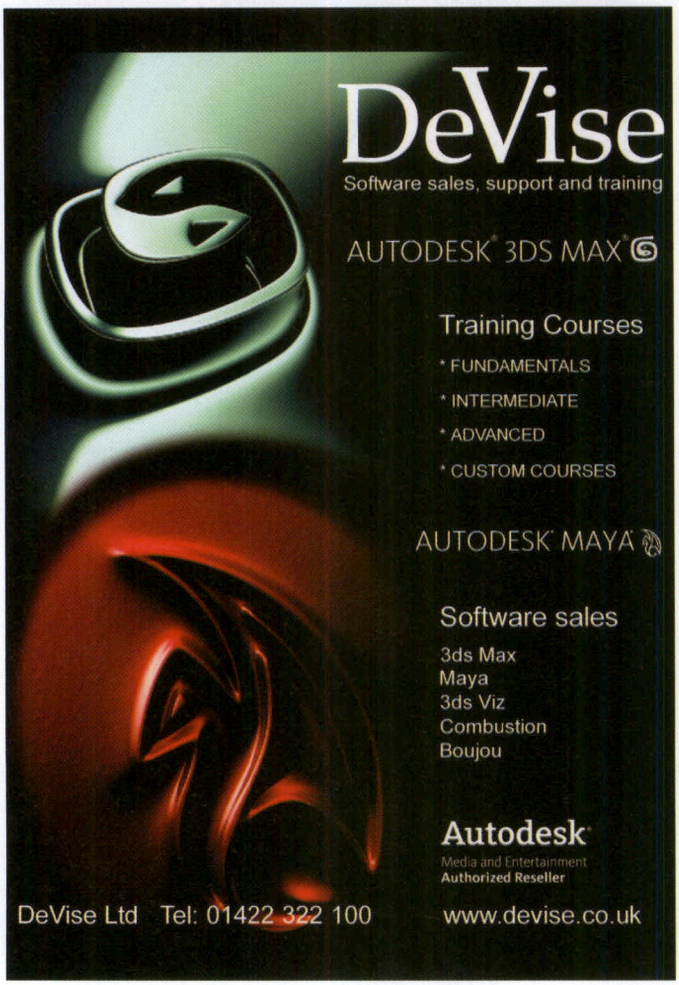

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The aim of MADCT is to develop participants' understanding of the role and consequences of digital technologies in contemporary culture, including some interdisciplinary areas such as performing arts, telecommunications, information technology, philosophy, law and education.

MA in Digital Humanities (MADH)
The MADH degree assists students to develop the analytical and practical skills that will enable them to understand and apply computing to the source materials and problems of the humanities. At the core of the programme is the meeting between the formal rigour of computational methods and the imaginative diversity of cultural expression.

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this month's cd

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Sample files for tutorials

Follow along with our tutorials on pages 46-61 with the sample files found on this month's disc.

Neil Duerden takes you through techniques for creating his painterly style of mixed-media images. Use the source images on the disc to work step-by-step through the tutorial.

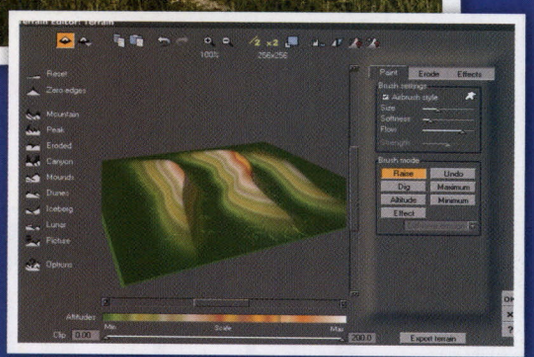
Learn how to use caustics light gel to generate shafts of light penetrating the depths of an ocean using our full free learning edition of Vue 6 Infinite (right), as well as the excellent EcoSystem to rapidly populate it with aquatic creatures.

The CD features the complete game engine for Kempt's viral classic *The Kung-Fu Statesmen*, so you can work through the process of creating a game in Adobe Flash.

There's also both the text and graphics for our After Effects tutorial – plus the finished AE project file.

FULL LEARNING EDITION OF THE LANDSCAPE CREATION TOOL

Vue 6 Infinite PLE



Vue 6 Infinite PLE offers you the chance to use all of the new features of the pro-level landscape-creation tool. It runs under Mac OS X 10.3/4 and Windows 2000/XP/Vista.

Vue 6 is the most efficient and advanced solution for creating, animating and rendering natural 3D environments.

It offers a high-end 3D scenery solution for VFX studios, animators, illustrators, architects, matte painters, and CG professionals. It is strongly focused on power, productivity and interoperability with existing toolkits.

With its intuitive, production-oriented layout, you will quickly enhance your production with rich EcoSystems of wind-swept trees and plants, spectral atmospheres and detailed terrains in fully animated scenes.

Vue 6 Personal Learning Edition is for personal, non-commercial use only. Users cannot exchange files with other users. For the first 30 days, users can render files up 800-x-600-pixels in size without a watermark. Larger files can be rendered, but will include a small watermark. After 30 days, all rendered files will include a watermark.

Visit *www.e-onsoftware.com* to download manuals and sample content for the suite.

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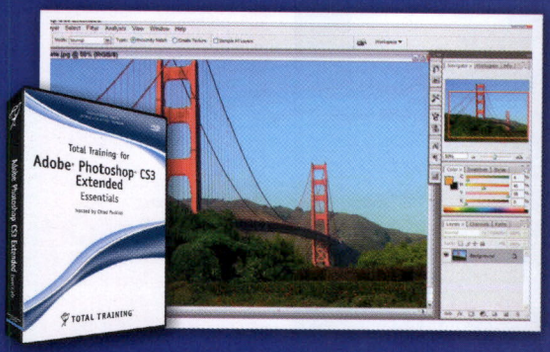
trial software

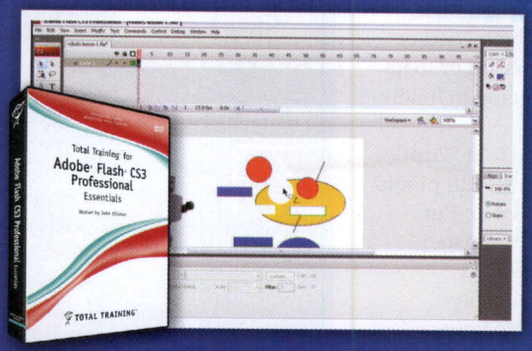
Halide *www.ambervisual.com*
Halide gives video the look of film, and achieves this at what the company says is twice the speed of its nearest competitor. It ships with a huge selection of film styles ranging from Hollywood to arthouse. The demo requires After Effects 5.5 or later on Windows.

Creative3D *www.humaneyes.com*
Creative3D is a stand-alone application offering design-centric tools for 3D and lenticular effects creation. The software includes a Layering tool for turning any 2D picture into 3D, using the Intelligent Brush for separating layers. It requires Mac OS X 10.4.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS FROM EACH OF TOTAL TRAINING'S NEW DVD SETS – OVER 2.5 HOURS!

Creative Suite 3 tutorials





Adobe's Creative Suite 3 is here, adding a huge array of new tools to your creative arsenal – and this month's disc has a series of video tutorials to help you get the best from them.

Courtesy of Total Training, the disc contains the first chapters of each of the company's brand-new DVD sets – covering the CS3 versions of Dreamweaver, Flash Professional, Illustrator, InDesign, and Photoshop.

Learn a wide range of techniques from Flash's new drawing tools to colour correction in Photoshop.

The tutorials are created and presented by the best trainers in their subjects – including Janine Warner, John Ulliman, Steve Samson, Adam Pratt and Chad Perkins.

These chapters will introduce the features added to each application. For more in-depth tutorials of each tool, you can purchase the full DVD sets from as little as $99 (£50) each.

To bring you all of the chapters, we've had to reduce the video's size by half. Total Training's sets are are presented in full DVD resolution.
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20 high-res stock photos

This month Digital Arts has teamed up with iStockphoto to bring you 20 high-resolution photos on themes of food, seasons and nature. These images are royalty-free and can be used in your commercial work.

iStockphoto is the world's fastest growing independent photography library – and features photographs, vector Illustrations, Flash files, and video clips. Becoming a member is free – there are no subscription fees or hidden costs.

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You can even contribute and sell your own work on the site – see the iStockphoto Web site for details.
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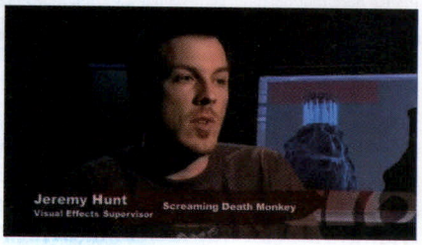
showcase



300 VFX INTERVIEWS
This video interviews the teams behind *300*'s visual effects from Pixel Magic and Screaming Death Monkey, who contributed hundreds of shots for the film.

DORITOS *BAG WARS*
Brand New School created *Bag Wars* for Doritos, a darkly comedic animated spot featuring two types of crisps battling it out for flavour dominance.

MOTOR *BLEEP #1*
This music video for dance act Motor was created 'live', using a series of lighting masks created in Flash for an 80s flavour. It's based on paintings by Patrick Nagel.

NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE
These two animated spots were created by Make as an internal project, combining humour with a serious point about what litter can do to natural environments.

letters

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Present on paper

There was one point in your article on perfect pitching (May 2007) that I don't think can be said enough: don't use PowerPoint to present print designs! No matter how good or high-resolution your projector, a proper proof on card or foam is always the best way to show anything that's going to finally end up on paper.

To get slightly techie for a second, your screen is at 72dpi – and when this is projected, it drops even further. With proofs you can push the detail level up to 1,200dpi or higher. Put bluntly, your work is always going to look better on paper.

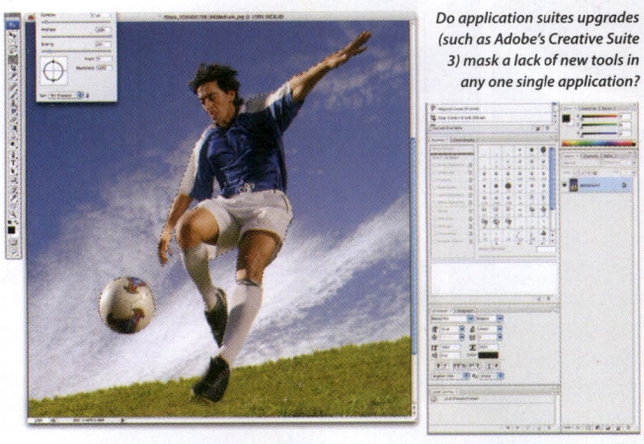
So save the projector for presentations of video and interactive pitches. Forget about being environmentally-friendly (sorry), buy a proofer or find a good repro house – and get the paper out if you want to win a client's favour.
Jane Burke

Better upgrades please

I wish that companies would focus on upgrading individual pieces of software, rather than entire suites, so that all tools get the attention that they deserve. As a graphic designer who uses InDesign and Photoshop, I couldn't care less that Adobe has released new versions of Dreamweaver and Flash alongside my applications in CS3 (previewed in May 2007). What I care about is that there are enough new tools to justify upgrading.

I'm glad I'm not like the Web crowd who have one application with a new interface and two without, but I would have expected more from a major upgrade to the tools I use.
Dean Walker

It makes us look like we just want to pass on the costs of our latest toys to our clients



Do application suites upgrades (such as Adobe's Creative Suite 3) mask a lack of new tools in any one single application?

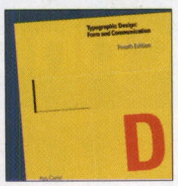
DigitalArts Star letter

Quick-&-dirty is ok

While in some respects I agree with Daniel Wolfe's letter (May 2007, on why Creative Suite 3 is bad for design as it encourages non-designers to use it), it does raise some concerns for me. Developers, especially the likes of Adobe, need to carefully consider whether they develop their software for pros or everybody.

There's no doubt that in this digital age, more and more people have access to tools that allow them to produce media to what could be considered a 'mediocre' standard by us as designers. But 'quick-&-dirty' design is not bad, just different. If clients only need - or can only afford - quick-&-dirty, then that's fine.

Talent is important, but value is too. If we factor the costs of CS3 into the next few jobs we all work on, then surely this does not do us any favours. It makes our profession look like we just want to pass on the costs of our latest toys to our clients, rather long-term investing in developing ourselves.
Mark Pawley



WRITE IN AND WIN!
This month, the star letter wins a copy of *Typographic Design: Form and Communication* by Rob Carter, Ben Day and Philip B Meggs.

The Fourth Edition of this popular book brings the reader up-to-date with the latest developments in designing with type.

Readers can purchase this 336-page book from Wiley at ***eu.wiley.com*** for £30.99.

BLOG

SLEEVE NOTES
Album art is dying - but what's going to replace it?

Despite iTunes giving you artwork in mini form, I really do think there is a generation gap here.

Today's youth seem perfectly content to deal with the music alone, not bothering with such niceties as packaging. Which, in one way, is to be welcomed as a positive development. And in another way is horrifying.

Back when I was a typical music-obsessed teenager, I luxuriated over sleeve art. Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, of which someone gave me an original vinyl copy, had absolutely no type on the sleeve. This was a revelation to me. None - not even the band name.

REM were always good value for money in the what-does-this-picture-mean stakes. I bought jazz CDs for abstract paintings on their sleeves as well as the music.

Little artwork panels in the likes of iTunes are not enough. I don't know what the packaging of the future is going to be, but I hope it's more than ephemeral ad campaigns and music videos.
Jason Walsh

Visit the Digital Arts Web site for more creative blogs and opinions.

There's no way to say no

I'm glad that your unnamed contributer finds it so easy to ditch bad clients (Letters, May 2007). If only it were the same for the rest of us. There are many clients that I'd like to ditch for being rude – even abusive sometimes – ignorant, bad payers or just being annoying: but I'm not going to turn down work unless I'd need some kind of time-slowing or -travel device to complete it before the deadline.

You almost never know where the job after next is coming from – and sometimes not even the next one. And you never know when a personnel change will turn a bad client into a good one (or vice versa).

The idea of rating jobs on both financial and emotional reward is noble – but some of us just need to pay the bills.
Jessica F

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